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AN ACCOUNT
OF THE
LIFE, OPINIONS, AND WRITINGS
OF
JOHN MILTON.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION TO PARADISE LOST.

BY

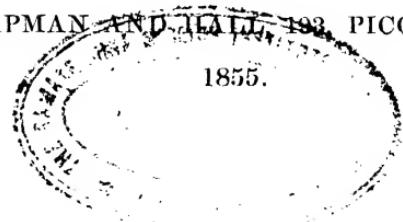
THOMAS KEIGHTLEY,

AUTHOR OF "MYTHOLOGY OF GREECE AND ITALY," "FAIRY MYTHOLOGY,
"HISTORY OF ENGLAND," ETC.

"Vagliami il lungo studio e il grande amore
Che m' han fatto cercar lo tuo volume,
Tu sei lo mio maestro e il mio autore."—DANTE.

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TO THE
RIGHT REV. CONNOP THIRLWALL, D.D.,
LORD BISHOP OF ST. DAVID'S,

IN RESPECT FOR HIGH TALENT AND EXTENSIVE LEARNING,
IN VENERATION FOR
ENLIGHTENED PIETY AND UNSWERVING VIRTUE.

AND
IN GRATITUDE FOR MANY ACTS OF TRUE FRIENDSHIP AND GENEROSITY,

This Volume,
DEVOTED TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS THEME OF MILTON,

IS INSCRIBED BY
THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE reading of Paradise Lost for the first time forms, or should form, an era in the life of every one possessed of taste and poetic feeling. To my own mind that time is ever present. It was just as I was emerging from mere boyhood ; the season was summer ; the scene a residence amid wood and water, at the foot of mountains, over which I beheld each morning the sun rising, invested with all his glories. The companion of Paradise Lost was the Jerusalem Delivered, in Hoole's tame version 'tis true, but perhaps at that age the couplet was more grateful to my ear than the stanza. The two poems combined to hold me in an ecstasy of delight. Alas ! that such happy days can never return, not even in imagination ! Some time after—for in those days books were not plentiful with me—I procured the whole of Milton's poetry. I was of course enchanted with Comus, and even then I could discern and admire the chaste, severe, and classic beauties of Paradise Regained and Samson Agonistes. Ever since the poetry of Milton has formed my constant

study,—a source of delight in prosperity, of strength and consolation in adversity.

It is now somewhat more than a quarter of a century since I first conceived the idea of endeavouring to render this noble poetry more intelligible, and consequently more attractive and useful to readers in general. The result has been the present volume, and an annotated edition of the Poems, now ready for the press. In this last, though the notes will probably not occupy a third of the space occupied by those in Todd's edition, they will, I believe, be found to elucidate the text more fully ; for nothing is left unexplained that seemed to require elucidation. I have neither the wish nor the hope to supplant that work; it will probably always remain as the Variorum edition, a garner into which wheat and chaff are gathered with equal care.

The expositor of Milton should endeavour to vie with Milton in knowledge. Coming into the world nearly two centuries later, it is neither a merit nor a boast that my scientific knowledge should be more extensive and more correct than his ; my task was to go back, and try to place myself in Milton's position with respect to science. Fortunately, in my early days I had acquired a knowledge of Hebrew, so that I have been able to read the Old Testament through in the original. I have not however thought it necessary to follow him into Targums and Mishnas; for I do not think he gathered any poetic fruit in these thickets. With our own old literature and with that of modern Italy I have long been familiar; while on

that of Greece and Rome I have bestowed only too much of my time and labour. I cannot, it is true, say that I regret having written the Mythology of Greece and Italy, for it has procured me consideration abroad and, alien as the subject is from the usual turn of the English mind, it seems to have taken a place in our literature. But, though I may have best elucidated the rural poetry of Virgil, and though I look back with pleasure to an excursion to Mantua to ascertain the scenery of the *Bucolics*, and to other circumstances connected with the Classics, yet I *do* most sincerely regret the time I devoted to them; for it was an act of the merest folly in one unconnected with Schools and Universities, more especially in me, whose views of what is of real importance in the languages and works of the ancients differ so much from those which generally prevail in our seats of learning. From these works I have derived no advantage whatever, and I have not even had the satisfaction of knowing in what estimation they are held, as those who read such books rarely give public expression to their opinions. Had I devoted that time and labour to modern literature, the result might have been widely different. The present volume may perhaps decide the question.

Though this volume is chiefly intended to serve as a companion and introduction to my own edition of the Poems, it will answer that purpose with any edition. In the First Part, which is purely biographic, I have collected everything that seemed of importance respecting Milton, his family, and his friends. The Second is de-

voted to his Opinions, among which, since the discovery of his work on Christian Doctrine, those on religion must hold a prominent place. Had I felt any scruples about developing them—which was not the case—they would have been removed by the example of the Bishop of Winchester, who, with that regard for truth and free inquiry which is so becoming and so laudable in a Christian prelate, has permitted his valuable translation of that work to be published in a form which has given it a far wider circulation than this volume can ever hope to obtain. I will take the opportunity here of mentioning that the eminent prelate to whom this work is inscribed is totally unacquainted with the contents. But he, too, is a sincere friend to truth and free inquiry, and he knows that falsehood and deceit form no part of my character.

The Third Part contains, first, an account of Milton's poetry anterior to *Paradise Lost*, and then what may be termed an Anthology from his prose works. It seemed to me to be a mere act of justice to his memory to draw these gems forth from the obscurity in which they lay, as forming portions of treatises which possess so little interest for readers of the present times. I have analysed two of these treatises, as specimens of Milton's reasoning powers.

An Introduction to *Paradise Lost* concludes the volume. In this I have given everything that appeared to me calculated to illustrate that poem. Some parts of it may appear to be, and perhaps are, rather illustrative of Scripture. I might say, they are therefore only the more valu-

able ; but my real excuse for these, and for one or two digressions in the preceding portion of the Work, is, that I am fond of digressions, and discursive writers are my favourites, and that I thought these matters worth preserving, while I have a secret feeling that my literary career *may* be destined to terminate with Milton. Few readers, I should hope, will refuse to accept of this excuse.

The reader of Milton should be acquainted with the state of public affairs in his time. I will here follow a rather unusual course, and boldly recommend my own History of England. I do so both on account of its conciseness, and because I believe it to be the only one that can lay any just claim to impartiality. Hume is never trustworthy ; Lingard, on account of his religious prejudices, rarely so,—most so however in this portion of his history. For myself I can truly assert that in relating the conflict between King and Parliament, I did my utmost to hold the balance even, and if it inclined at all, it was to the side of the former. For though I did not cry with Almanzor—

I cannot stay to ask which cause is best,
Yet this is so to me because opprest ;

still my mind may have been secretly swayed by the royal misfortunes, and Charles perhaps appears to more advantage in my pages than he would in those of strict and rigorous truth. But where are such pages to be found ? It has not, I fear, been given to man to be strictly impartial in history.

In all my works I have adopted as a rule, from

which I have never deviated, the principle of acknowledging the obligation when I was indebted for opinions or ideas to any preceding writer. What is unacknowledged therefore I claim as my own, though I may have, and probably often have been anticipated ; for my reading has been select, rather than extensive, my literary appetite, though fond of variety, not being omnivorous. The opinions which I have given on various subjects have been long and carefully weighed, and viewed under every light ; and thence, demonstration being out of the question, though they may be rejected by those of a different turn of mind, I do not think they can be confuted.

Splendid passages, and what is usually called fine writing, will not be found in this volume. I have little talent and still less taste for them, for I have usually found the brilliants to be false, composed of metaphor, paradox, and antithesis. But Truth is *simplex munditiis*; the habit in which she loves to appear is simple, chaste in hue, formed to display her fair lineaments and proportions, and put on at times with an air of graceful negligence. All that I ever then aim at is perspicuity, purity, and correctness of language, carefully shunning stiffness and affectation, and happy if now and then I can approach to vigour or amenity. I would fain have the idea of the writer absorbed and lost in the subject.

As in writing this volume I have been actuated solely by a regard for truth and reverence for the fame of Milton—years and their attendant evils having nearly

quenched my love of fame—and as I live in seclusion, with little society beyond that of my own family, I may perhaps say without presumption that I am almost indifferent to criticism: praise cannot elate, or censure depress me. To the public expression of either, especially the latter, my ear is little used, and I have long been accustomed to be content with the silent approbation of my own mind. Conscious then of having exerted myself to the utmost of my powers to do justice to my subject, justice is all I ask of any, while to the friendly critic I would say—

Approve it only—'tis too late to praise.

T. K.

May 4, 1855.

CORRECTIONS.

Page 86, line 14, before *should be* very soon after.

Page 259, line 5 *from bottom, after two add* or even three.

Page 292, line 11, *omit* Dante.

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PART I.

LIFE OF MILTON.

CORRECTIONS.

My friend Mr. Carruthers, of Inverness, has kindly favoured me with some remarks on this Work. As they are corrective of errors into which I had fallen, I lay a part of them before the reader. To Mr. Marsh, of Warrington, I am also indebted for some valuable information and documents.

T. K.

Page 50. *Milton's Letter*.—“This is certainly not in Milton's handwriting: I am as positive of this as of my own existence. It is a fine current clerk-like hand, without interlineation or erasure. Read the letter, and see a distinct allusion by Milton to his blindness. The signature is not unlike Milton's, but appears to be by the same hand as the body of the letter.”—C.

Page 52.—Mrs. Foster was right in saying that Milton's second wife died of a consumption more than three months after her lying-in; the child was baptized October 19, 1657. See Cunningham's Johnson, i. 105, iii. 423.”—C.

Page 60.—“The date of the marriage license is 11th Feb., 1662 [–3?].—Sir C. Young's Pedigree of the Minshulls in Mitford's Life, prefixed to works, octavo edition.”—C.

Page 90.—It appears from the facsimile of the signatures to the receipts published by Mr. Marsh, that Anne Milton could not write, and Mary very badly. There is great mystery about the education that Milton gave his daughters.

Page 93.—Phillips says, etc. “You have been misled by Johnson. Phillips does not make this statement.”—C.

Page 158.—In his ‘Iconoclastes’ he speaks of the infection of Arian and Pelagian heresies, a proof that up to his forty-first year he had not imbibed Arian opinions.”—C.

Page 257.—The right date is 1631. The subject of Beaumont's poem, as Mr. Hunter has shown, was Lucy, daughter of the Earl of Exeter: she died in 1614.

Pages 267–269.—Donne's ‘Divine Sonnets’ are formed on the Italian model; but they were not published till 1633.—Ronsard and other French poets of the sixteenth century wrote numerous sonnets.—Among the one thousand sonnets of T. Tasso, there are *two* of the same form as Milton's *three* Italian sonnets.

Page 383, note †.—This was the orthography of the time.

Page 434.—“Gods and men,” Sam. Agon. v. 545, ed. 1671. “Gods or men,” ed. 1680, and all till 1747.

Page 439.—*Sirocco* is Italian also.

Page 483.—This is a secondary, not the primary sense of the Hebrew terms.

ERRATA.

Page 4, last line, *for 1642 read 1612.*

Page 10, line ninth, *for he would relish read* would retch.

Page 28, last but one, *for Spenstow read Spurstow.*

Page 60, last line, *for features read fortunes.*

Page 234, last but two, *for We read we.*

Page 314, seventh from bottom, *for 1653 read 1652, dele* or early in 1654.

Page 315, line twelfth, *for 1656, 1657 read 1655, 1656.*

Page 320, line eighteenth, *for potentem read potantem.*

Page 387, line seventh, *for never read seldom.*

Page 452, line seventh, *for external read eternal.*

LIFE OF MILTON.*



FIRST PERIOD.

AT SCHOOL AND AT THE UNIVERSITY.

A. D. 1608-1632. A. ET. 1-24.

FAMILY names, as it is well known, not only in this country, but throughout all Europe, are in numerous instances derived from those of places. In every county of England are still to be found—and the cases were far more numerous in former days—families bearing the same names with its towns, villages, and hamlets. This however gives no indication of their original social position. It only shows that at one time they dwelt in or came from that place, and the name was given alike to the homeless vagrant and the lord of the manor.

In the sixteenth century a family which had derived its name of Milton from a town of that name† (the con-

* See Note A. at the end of this Part.

† There are at least twenty places of this name in England. Of these, two are in Oxfordshire,—Great Milton, a parish in the hundred of Thame, and Milton, a hamlet in the parish of Adderbury, within a few miles of Banbury. There is also a Milton seven miles south of Abingdon, in the adjoining county of Berks. It is this last that Phillips, the nephew and biographer of Milton, gives as the original seat of

traction of Middleton) in Oxfordshire, was resident in that county. It had formerly, we are told, been of considerable opulence and importance; but having taken the Lancastrian side in the Wars of the Roses, it had shared in the misfortunes of that party, and been shorn of its wealth and consequence,—the landed property having been confiscated, and the then proprietor left with nothing but what he held in right of his wife. We hear nothing more of the fortunes of the Milton family till the latter half of the sixteenth century, when we find John Milton holding the office of under-ranger of the royal forest of Shotover, in the vicinity of the city of Oxford.* He was, it appears, a rigid professor of the doctrines of the lately dominant superstition; and when his son, of the same name as himself, whom he had sent to the College of Christ Church in the adjacent University, had there learned and embraced the Reformed doctrines, he disinherited him, and there is no account of his ever having again taken him into favour; nor is the circumstance very likely, such was the spirit of religious rancour, we may add religious fervour and sincerity, which prevailed in those times.†

John Milton the younger was thus at an early age thrown, we may suppose, entirely on his own resources. It is not unlikely that the profession of the law had been his original destination; and now, probably seeing these higher prospects blighted, and being a young man of

the family; which he said was proved by the monuments to be seen in the church of that place. No such monuments however were to be seen when Newton sought for them. Wood said the family was from Great Milton.

* Aubrey says he resided at Holton, which is six miles to the east of Oxford, Shotover lying between them.

† See Note B. at the end of this Part.

talent and energy, he resolved to devote himself to that inferior branch of the law, the professors of which were named Scriveners.* A friend, who was himself of that profession, having saved him from the necessity of serving an apprenticeship, he commenced business in the city of London, in Bread-street, near St. Paul's, as we are told.† As was the usage, he had a sign to his shop, adopting for that purpose a spread eagle, the armorial bearing of his family.

From all that we can collect and conjecture respecting him, John Milton of Bread-street appears to have been a man of much more than ordinary talent. By skill and diligence in his profession, he was enabled to bring up and support a family in credit and respectability, and to accumulate such a fortune as enabled him eventually to retire from business, and pass his days in ease and independence. But he was at no period of his life the mere man of business. Amid his legal avocations, he found leisure to cultivate literature,‡ and still more the science of music, for which he had a natural genius, and in which he became such a proficient as to rank among the most celebrated composers of the time.§

John Milton must have been more than forty years of

* The Scrivener would seem (as the name denotes) to have been originally merely a copyist, as at the present day. But in the time of John Milton, he answered to the notary of the Continent, and in some respects to the modern lawyer or attorney. His business was to draw up wills, bonds, mortgages, and all other legal contracts, and to this he usually added the occupation of a money-lender, using his own money or that of his clients.

† Aubrey, Phillips. This perhaps is not quite correct, for Mr. Hunter (Milton, p. 10) notices a bond dated March 4, 1602, and made payable "at the new shop of John Milton, scrivener, in Bread-street."

‡ Some wretched verses of his are given by Mr. Hunter, p. 13.

§ See Burney's Hist. of Mus. vol. iii. p. 134. "I have been told,"

age* when his circumstances seemed to entitle him to enter into the state of matrimony. According to her grandson Phillips, the name of his wife was Sarah Caston, of a respectable family originally from Wales, but then probably settled in London, while Aubrey tells us, apparently on the authority of her son Christopher, that her name was Bradshaw. This is a point then not easy to decide: it seems strange that a son should not know the maiden name of his mother, or a grandson that of his grandmother. Milton certainly appears to have been related to the celebrated John Bradshaw; and the most probable supposition is, that it was through his mother. We have the testimony of her son to the excellency of her character, and her numerous deeds of charity.† It was probably from her that he derived his weakness of sight; for Aubrey tells us that her eyes were weak, and that she had to use spectacles at an early age.

The offspring of this marriage was two sons and three daughters, named, in the order of their births, Anne, John, Sarah, Tabitha, and Christopher. Of these Sarah and Tabitha died in infancy, the former very shortly after her birth;‡ of Anne and Christopher we shall treat when we come to our poet's family.

says Phillips, “and I take it by our author himself, that his father composed an *H. Domine* of forty parts, for which he was rewarded with a gold medal and chain by a Polish prince, to whom he presented it; and that some of his songs are to be seen in old Whitby's set of airs, beside some compositions of his in Ravenscroft's Psalms.”

* As he died in 1647, and as Aubrey says that he was able to read without spectacles at the age of eighty-four, he must have been past forty at the time of his marriage.

† “*Matre probatissima et eleemosynis per viciniam potissimum nota.*”
—*Defensio Secunda.*

‡ Todd gives the following extracts from the registry of Allhallows:—

“The xvth daye of July, 1642, was baptizid Sara, the daughter of

John Milton, third of the name, was born at his father's house, in Bread-street, on the 9th of December, 1608, and, as appears from the register of the adjacent church of Allhallows, was baptized on the 20th of the same month. It is probable that, as is usually the case, he gave early indications of his genius, for his father engaged, as a tutor for him, a clergyman named Thomas Young, a man of learning and piety, for whom his pupil conceived a sincere affection. If we may credit Aubrey, he had given proofs of poetic genius at the age of ten years; and it may have been this, combined with his beauty, for Nature had been nearly as liberal to his person as to his mind, that induced his father to have his portrait painted, when he was at that age, by a Dutch artist named Cornelius Jansen,*—a portrait still extant.

But his father was too wise a man to deprive him of the advantages of a public school, when they could be had without danger to his morals. He accordingly, while retaining his private tutor, sent him to the school of St. Paul's,† which was at no great distance from his home, and was then presided over by Alexander Gill, a man of learning, with whose son of the same name, then usher to his father, and afterwards his successor, the

John Mylton, serivener. She was buried the vith of August following, in the church.”

“ The xxxth of January, 1613 [*i.e.* 1614], was baptized Tabitha, the daughter of Mr. John Mylton.”

It may be useful to observe, that at that time, and till the year 1752, the year began in England on the 22nd of March.

* Todd tells us, from Walpole, that 1618 is the date of Jansen's first works in England, so that John Milton must have been one of the first who employed him.

† This, we think, may be inferred from his own words, presently to be quoted. Todd thinks that he was not sent to St. Paul's till Young quitted England, in 1623.

young poet became a great favourite, and their intimacy gradually ripened into friendship. At what age he was sent to St. Paul's School we are not informed, but he remained there till he was deemed qualified to go to one of the Universities. From family reasons perhaps, his father gave the preference to Cambridge; and on the 12th of February, 1624-5, he was entered as a pensioner at Christ's College in that University, being then just sixteen years and two months old.

We will here pause and consider the progress he appears to have made in knowledge and literature at this time. He says himself:—"My father destined me while yet a child to the study of polite literature, which I embraced with such avidity that from the twelfth year of my age I hardly ever retired to rest from my studies till midnight, which was the first source of injury to my eyes, to the natural weakness of which were added frequent headaches; all of which not retarding my eagerness after knowledge, he took care to have me instructed daily both at school and by other masters at home." Aubrey says, in accordance with this, "that when Milton went to school he studied very hard and sat up very late, commonly till twelve or one o'clock, and his father ordered the maid to sit up for him." We are also informed that Humphrey Lowndes the printer, who lived in the same street with his father, used to lend him books, chiefly of poetry, two of which, the works of Spenser, and Sylvester's translation of Du Bartas, are particularly noticed. Beside the Greek and Latin, in which latter language he composed in both verse and prose with ease and elegance, he seems, even before he went to the University, to have acquired a knowledge of Hebrew; his instructor

* *Defensio Secunda.*

in it being his tutor Young.* Of his Latin compositions at this period we have no remains ; but his first epistle to Young is dated March 26, 1625, only a few weeks after he had been entered at the University. In it he says, “ *Hæc scripsi Londini inter urbana diverticula, non libris, ut soleo, circumseptus.*” In 1523, his fifteenth year, he had made his translations of the 114th and 136th Psalms into English verse.

The tutor at Cambridge under whom Milton was placed was the Reverend William Chappell, afterwards Provost of Trinity College, Dublin, and eventually Bishop of Cork and Ross. The genius and the superior acquirements of the young student did not long lie concealed, and they were frequently called into exercise either in prose prolixions or in poetic elegies, etc., on the deaths of distinguished persons, which it was at that time customary in the Universities to impose on those eminent for their skill in Latin or English versification. But to the mind of Milton the barren, dry, useless systems of logic and other parts of science so-styled then read at the Universities were eminently distasteful, and he made no secret of his disgust. It was probably this, and some overt acts arising from it, which drew on him the sentence of rustication, which, as he informs us himself, was passed on him in some part of his University career.† It is quite evident that it was nothing of which he had any reason to be ashamed ; and moreover it could not have been of any long duration, for he took the two degrees of Bachelor and of Master of Arts at the regular times. To one of his opponents at a later period, who asserted that he had been vomited out of the University after

* See his Epistle to Young. March 26, 1625.

† See Note C. at end of this Part.

having spent there a riotous youth, he replied :* “ It hath given me an apt occasion to acknowledge publicly with all grateful mind the more than ordinary favour and respect which I found, above any of my equals, at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the Fellows of the College wherein I spent some years, who at my parting, after I had taken two degrees, as the manner is, signified many ways how much better it would content them if I would stay, as by many letters full of kindness and loving respect, both before that time and long after, I was assured of their singular good affection toward me.” At a still later period, in reply to a similar charge, he says :† “ My father sent me to Cambridge ; there I devoted myself for a space of seven years to the literature and arts usually taught, free from all reproach, and approved of by all good men, as far as the degree of Master, as it is termed.”‡

In the year 1632, the twenty-fourth of his age, Milton having taken the degree of M.A., finally quitted Cambridge. According to Wood, he was admitted three years later to the same degree at Oxford.§

* Apology for Smeetymnuus. See below, Writings of Milton.

† Defensio Secunda.

‡ Wood says that at College “ he was esteemed to be a virtuous and sober person, yet not to be ignorant of his own parts.”

§ This Wood’s informant [Aubrey] says he had from Milton himself. The reason of his incorporation not being to be found in the books at Oxford was, he says, that the then Registrar was negligent, and did not put down the incorporations from Cambridge, which were very numerous at that time.

SECOND PERIOD.

AT HORTON AND ON THE CONTINENT.

A. D. 1632-1639. A. ET. 24-31.

MILTON's father, who was now an old man, and who had retired from business on a competent income, was at this time, and had been perhaps for the last few years, wholly or in part, resident on a property he had purchased in the village of Horton, near Colnebrooke, in Buckinghamshire,* the Suburban from which his son dates one of his letters to his friend Alexander Gill.† Hither Milton, on quitting the University, came, and took up his permanent abode. It had been his father's wish and his

* Mr. Todd was informed by the rector of the parish in 1808, that the house had been pulled down about ten years previously. Birken Manor-house, near the church, is still *said* to have been Milton's residence.

† Warton, in his note on Eleg. i. 50, says, "Some country-house of Milton's father, very near London, is here intended, of which we have now no notices." In our note on this place we have shown that Warton misunderstood it. It could not of course have been the house at Horton that he meant, yet he immediately after quotes the date of a letter from Milton to his friend A. Gill, "*E nostro Suburbano, Decemb. 14, 1634,*" which was plainly written from Horton. Warton also quotes from one of the Academic Prolusions: "Testor ipse lucos et flumina et dilectos villarum ulmos, sub quibus aestate proxime preterita—si dearum arcana eloqui liceat—summam cum Musis gratiam habuisse me jueunda memoria recolo, ubi et ego inter rura et semotos saltus velut occulto aeo crescere mihi potuisse visus sum"—all which applies very accurately to Horton, but not to any place nearer to London.

own intention that he should enter the Church, but he had given up that design. His own account is as follows:*

“By the intentions of my parents and friends I was destined of a child to the service of the Church, and in my own resolutions. Till coming to some maturity of years, and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the Church, that he who would take orders must subscribe *Slave* and take an oath withal, which, unless he took with a conscience that he would relish, he must either straight perjure or split his faith—I thought better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing.”

It is not perhaps possible to conceive a higher degree of happiness than that which Milton must have enjoyed during the five years which he spent at Horton. His days were in general devoted to intense and unremitting study, varied by occasional visits to London for the purpose of purchasing books or of getting instruction in mathematics or in music, in both of which he took great pleasure. He corresponded with his friends Gill and Diodati, and probably with others with whose names we are unacquainted. In one of his letters to Diodati, dated from London, Sept. 23, 1637, he says: “You shall likewise have some account of my studies. In a continued course of reading I have deduced the affairs of the Greeks to the time when they ceased to be Greeks. I was long occupied in the obscurity of those of the Italians under the Lombards, the Franks, and the Germans, to the time when liberty was granted to them by Rodolf King of Germany; from that point it will be better to read separately what each community has done by its own resources.” In this same letter he mentions an

* Reasons of Church Government, etc.

intention he had of taking chambers in one of the Inns of Court, where there would be a pleasant shady walk [he had Gray's Inn probably in view], where he could enjoy himself with some companions, and more readily pay visits to such places as he might wish to frequent. "For you know," says he, "that where I now am* I am cramped and obscure."

Beside the course of historic reading which he indicates above, he read the Greek and Latin writers in general, and probably some of the Fathers of the Church. To these he added the poets and other writers of modern Italy; and as he was acquainted with French and Spanish, he may, though we have no information to that effect, have studied Rabelais, Montaigne, Cervantes, and other eminent writers in these languages.

While he was thus enjoying the delights of literature, and storing his mind with various kinds of knowledge, his muse did not slumber. It was, beyond doubt, at this period that he wrote his beautiful pendants, *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso*. Horton also witnessed the birth of *Arcades*, *Comus*,† and *Lycidas*; and in all probability it was here also that he wrote his beautiful Latin poem, *Ad Patrem*. The whole of the poetry produced at Horton bears strong evidence of the calm, cheerful frame of mind which he seems to have enjoyed while dwelling amid its sequestered rural scenery. In his poems written during the latter years of his residence at the University, and while he was engaged in the study of theology, all is solemn, serious, and deeply imbued with the spirit of devotion; but in those com-

* He would seem to mean Horton, but Hayley says he means the lodgings which he was in in London whence the letter is dated.

† See Note D. at the end of this Part.

posed at Horton we everywhere discern animation, grace, elegance, and sweetness ; the tone is cheerful, and the verses replete with rural imagery. Even in *Il Penseroso* and *Lycidas* there is no gloom, and both terminate in a tone of calm and tranquil cheerfulness. We may say of his Muse in these poems—

“But such a sadness did her thoughts employ
As lives within the neighbourhood of joy.”*

On the 3rd of April, 1637, our poet's excellent mother departed this life. It had probably been her maternal uneasiness which had hitherto checked his desire to visit the Continent ; and that impediment being now removed, he easily obtained his father's permission to put his design into execution. As he had lately, by means of his *Comus*, formed the acquaintance of Sir Henry Wootton, the Provost of Eton, who had been for some time ambassador at Venice, that accomplished scholar and statesman wrote him a letter of advice and directions for his travels, with an introduction to the tutor, it would appear, in the family of Lord Scudamore, Viscount Sligo, the English resident at the Court of France. Sir Henry's letter is dated April 18, 1638, and in the following month Milton embarked for the Continent. He travelled as a gentleman, being attended all the time he was abroad by his own servant, whom he had taken with him from England.†

At Paris he met with a very kind reception from Lord Scudamore, to whom he had an introduction. At his particular desire he introduced him to the celebrated Hugo Grotius, at that time resident there for Christina

* Dodsley's Collection, vi. 310.

† For the following account of his travels we are indebted to Milton himself, in his *Defensio Secunda*.

Queen of Sweden. We are not informed of any of the circumstances of this interview; but Phillips says that "Grotius took the visit kindly, and gave him entertainment suitable to his worth and the high commendations he had heard of him." In truth our loss is probably not very great, for in general little that is of much importance takes place at such interviews.

He only staid a few days in Paris, which probably possessed little to interest him, and then left it, directing his course for Italy, the goal of his desires. Lord Scudamore kindly furnished him with letters to the English merchants at the ports of the South which he was likely to visit. We are not informed of his route through France, but it was of course the ordinary one through Lyons, and probably down the Rhône; for instead of entering Italy by the Alps and Turin, we find that he went to Nice, and thence by sea to Genoa. From this city, as he informs us, he proceeded, probably by sea also, to Leghorn and thence to Pisa, whence he went on to Florence, where he made a stay of two months.

Florence was then, as ever, the most literary city in Italy. Milton probably had from Sir Henry Wootton, from Lord Scudamore, or from some other quarter, letters of introduction to some person of influence there, for he obtained ready admission to those literary societies named Academies; and as it was the custom that every one who was admitted should give some specimens of his literary powers, he used for this purpose such of his Latin poems as he retained in his memory, to which he added the Italian sonnets which he composed while there, all of which were received with applause. Count Carlo Dati wrote a Latin address panegyrizing him in high, almost extravagant terms; a gentleman of literary taste and

attainments named Francini wrote an Italian ode in his praise ; and Antonio Malatesti presented him with a copy of his manuscript poems named *La Tina*, with a handsome dedication to him in the title-page.*

The other distinguished Florentines with whom he was on terms of intimacy were, he tells us, Buonmattei, the celebrated grammarian, Gaddi, Frescobaldi, Coltellino, Clementillo, more properly Chimentelli, and others whom he does not name. When some years later he was nobly advocating the liberty of the press, he tells how these learned and ingenious men deplored the intellectual bondage under which they groaned. “ I could recount,” says he, “ what I have seen and heard in other countries where this kind of inquisition tyrannizes ; where I have sat among their learned men (for this honour I had), and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom as they supposed England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought ; that this was it which had damped the glory of Italian wits ; that nothing had been there written now these many years but flattery and fustian.” The words which immediately follow these are important, as they inform us that Milton had also the high honour of being acquainted with the most illustrious philosopher of the age : “ There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown

* Mr. Singer, who has seen this very copy, has given the title as follows, in Notes and Queries, viii. 295 :—

“ *La Tina, Equivoci Rusticali*, di Antonio Malatesti cōposti nella sua Villa di Triano, il Settembre dell’ anno 1637.

“ Sonetti cinquanta dedicati all’ Ill^{mo} Signore et Padrone Oss^{mo} il Signore Giovanni Milton, nobil’ Inghilese.”

La Tina (probably from *tina*, winepress), Mr. Singer tells us, was the name of the poet’s rustic mistress, to whom the sonnets are supposed to have been addressed.

old, a prisoner to the Inquisition for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought." Whether this was on his first or second visit to Florence he does not inform us, and we consequently have no means of ascertaining. Our young poet's intercourse at Florence however does not appear to have been confined to the men of letters, for he would also seem to have mingled in general society. It in fact appears from his Italian sonnets that he met there a lady, apparently a Bolognese, who made some impression on his heart.

Instead of taking the more agreeable and picturesque route by Perugia, he went to Rome by Siena, which, we may observe, was at that time, and long continued to be, the ordinary route between Florence and Rome. In this former mistress of the world he made another stay of two months, engaged, it would appear, chiefly in studying the ruins and the antiquities. In all probability he had brought with him letters of introduction from Florence. Among his literary acquaintances at Rome we meet with the names of Salsilli and Selvaggi, otherwise little known, the former of whom wrote a Latin tetrastich, the latter a Latin distich, in his praise,—neither of much merit, but both indicative of the strong idea he must have given of his poetic powers.

But his most valuable acquaintance at Rome seems to have been Lucas Holstein, or, as it was Latinized, Holstenius, at that time keeper of the Vatican Library, a man of learning, and who had at one time spent three years at Oxford. As far as we can collect from Milton's own account, he went to the library either without an introduction, or with a very slight one from a person of the name of Cherubini, not otherwise mentioned, and made

himself known to the learned Librarian. Holstein received him with the greatest politeness, took him over the library and showed him all its treasures. He seems to have been so much struck by the stores of knowledge and the strength and variety of the mental powers displayed by his new acquaintance, that he spoke of him in the highest terms to the Pope's eldest nephew Cardinal F. Barberini, who, as we learn elsewhere, was guardian or patron of the English, an office apparently similar to that of Proxenus in ancient Greece. In consequence of this, soon after, at a splendid concert given by this munificent Cardinal, to which, probably as a matter of course, all the English travellers at Rome were invited, he waited in person at the door of the saloon to receive the young Englishman, and *almost*, says Milton, taking him by the hand, led him into the room with every mark of attention and respect. Holstein accompanied him when he went next day to pay his respects to the Cardinal, and nothing could be more gracious than the reception he met with from that prince of the Church. It may be here observed that, beside speaking Latin, which every scholar at that time could do, Milton, as his poetic compositions in it evince, was a perfect master of the Italian language, and probably spoke it with fluency and ease. During his abode at Rome,—at the Cardinal's probably and elsewhere, for he heard her several times,—Milton, whose passion for music was extreme, heard the celebrated Leonora Baroni sing, and he repaid the delight which she yielded him with three Latin epigrams which he addressed to her. He also repaid Salsilli for his terastich by an elegant copy of Latin Seazontes addressed to him on the occasion of his illness.

After, as we have said, a residence of two months at

Rome, Milton left that city and set out for Naples. He of course travelled in the ordinary mode, by *vettura*, and, as he tells us, one of his travelling companions was a hermit, whom we may presume to have been a man of some taste and learning, as he was acquainted with the Marquis Manso. On their arrival at Naples the hermit introduced to that nobleman the young English traveller, with whose conversation on the journey he had probably been much pleased.

To every one acquainted with the history of the unhappy Torquato Tasso, the name of John Baptist Manso, Marquis of Villa, must be familiar. He had been the patron, friend, and biographer of that poet, and he had been the same to Marini, a poet whose birth also Naples claims. He was now nearly eighty years of age, yet he showed the stranger every attention, becoming his guide to all places worthy of his inspection. "I experienced from him, as long as I remained there," says Milton, "the most friendly attentions. He accompanied me to the various parts of the city, and took me over the Viceroy's palace, and came more than once to my lodgings to visit me. At my departure he made earnest excuses to me for not having been able to show me the further attentions which he desired in that city, on account of my unwillingness to conceal my religious sentiments." The venerable nobleman wrote a Latin distich in our poet's praise, who repaid it by a Latin poem which left far behind anything written in his honour even by the great Torquato Tasso.

It had been Milton's original intention to visit both Sicily and Greece, and thus to have explored all the regions in which classic poetry had had its birth, and from which it had drawn its inspiration. But while his mind

was occupied with the idea of the pleasures he seemed about to enjoy, he received tidings of the alarming state of affairs in England;* and aware that a rupture must ensue between the King and his people, he resolved to return and take whatever part Providence might assign him in the impending struggle. “I deemed it,” says he, “to be disgraceful for me to be idling away my time abroad, for my own gratification, while my countrymen were contending for their liberty.” Animated with these honourable intentions, he turned his back on fair Parthenope and set out once more for Rome, though his friends among the English merchants told him that they had been advised by letters from that city that the English Jesuits there were plotting against him, on account of the freedom with which he expressed himself on the subject of religion. In fact, he seems not to have adhered to the maxim of the prudent Italian, communicated by his friend Sir Henry Wootton, *Il viso sciolto ed i pensieri stretti*. It may be even doubted if it were possible for one of his open, candid, and fearless temper to have adhered to a maxim of such timid caution. The rule which, he says, he had laid down for himself was, never to introduce the subject of religion, but if questioned as to his faith, not to dissemble it, be the consequences what they might.

He accordingly quitted Naples and set out once more for Rome, where he arrived in safety, and where he made an abode of another two months, enjoying the society of his literary friends and unmolested by the Jesuits, though never concealing his religion, and boldly defending it when

* Just about the time that Milton was setting out on his travels; the National Covenant was renewed in Scotland, and the differences between the King and the people of that country assumed every day more and more a menacing aspect.

attacked. He thence proceeded to Florence, where he found himself as welcome, he says, as if it had been his native country. While there he wrote a letter to his friend Holstein at Rome, who had requested him to inspect for him some MS. in the Laurentian Library, a thing which, he tells him, he had hitherto found it impossible to accomplish, on account of the illiberal system on which that Library was managed. This letter, which is dated March 30, 1639, is of importance in settling the chronology of his travels.

After another stay of two months in this capital of Tuscany, during which he made an excursion of a few days to Lucca, he took a final leave of his friends there, and travelling of course by *vettura*, he crossed the Apennines to Bologna, and went thence by Ferrara to Venice. This celebrated city detained him an entire month, but he does not inform us how he passed his time there, or what acquaintances he made. He had, it appears, been a diligent collector of both books and music during his residence in Italy; and being now at a seaport, and having an opportunity of sending his literary treasures to England by sea, and thus becoming more expedite for his remaining travels, he took advantage of it, and put them on board an English vessel, at least a vessel bound for London, where, as he says nothing to the contrary, we may presume they arrived in safety.

Quitting the then Queen of the Adriatic, he proceeded through Padua and Vicenza to Verona, where of course he viewed the amphitheatre; and so on to Milan and over the Pennine Alps, *i.e.* Mount St. Bernard, to Geneva. He does not tell us how long he remained in this metropolis of Calvinism, but while there he was in the habit of daily intercourse with John Diodati, the professor of theology,

the uncle of his friend Charles Diodati. Here also he made the acquaintance of Frederick Spanheim, an eminent theologian. He thence proceeded to Lyons ; and taking his former route through France, reached his native land in safety some time in the month of August, 1639, after an absence of fifteen months.

It does not seem to have occurred to any of Milton's biographers, to endeavour to assign the time of the year that he was in the different cities of Italy which he visited ; yet it is not an uninteresting subject, and we will therefore try if we can succeed in elucidating it.

It is probable that he reached Florence some time in the month of July, 1638,* for he was two months there, and it is not at all likely that he would have set out for Rome till toward the middle or end of September, so as not to arrive till the period of the *malaria* in that city was nearly over, and people of rank were returning to it from the country. He staid there, as he tells us, about two months, so he may have reached Naples toward the end of November. His stay there must have been brief, perhaps not more than a fortnight, and he was probably back in Rome before Christmas. As he remained there two months, and was two months more in Florence, and one month in Venice, and we know that he was in Geneva in the beginning of June,† he probably left Rome about the middle of February. He wrote, as we have

* As he left England in May and made only a short stay in Paris, it is difficult to conjecture how he spent so much time on his way to Italy.

† Mr. Hunter (p. 23) mentions an album kept at Geneva at that time, in which Milton had written—

“ If virtue feeble were,
Heaven itself would stoop to her.

“ Cœlum non animum nuto dum trans mare curro.

Junii 10^o. 1639. Johannes Miltonius, Anglus.”

seen, to Holstein from Florence on the 30th of March, and within the next fortnight he must have set out for Venice, where he spent a month, and so left it in or about the middle of May, so as to reach Geneva by the end of that month or the beginning of June. He must have made some stay in Geneva, as he did not land in England till some time in August.*

When terminating at Geneva the brief account which he gives of his travels, Milton expresses himself in the following terms :—“ Here again I take God to witness, that I lived in all those places, where so much license is given, free from and untouched by any kind of vice and infamy, continually bearing in mind that even if I could escape the eyes of men, I could not escape those of God.” Even in his Italian poetry, written at Florence, we may discern the same religious tone which characterized his English compositions anterior to his abode at Horton. From his poem to Manso, and from the complimentary verses of his Roman friends, we may perceive that he had formed the intention and made known his resolution of writing an heroic poem, taking his subject from some part of the ancient British history, as narrated by Geoffrey of Monmouth. There is not the slightest reason for supposing that the Fall of Man had as yet presented itself to his mind, as the subject of either an epic poem or a drama.

* We feel a kind of pride at the reflection that our own route in Italy, the only time we have been able to visit it, and the time we spent in its various cities, have several points of coincidence with those of Milton.

THIRD PERIOD.

CIVIL WAR AND COMMONWEALTH.

A. D. 1639-1660. A. æT. 31-52.

MILTON's return to England was not, as he himself (by a slip of memory, no doubt) states,* "at the time when Charles, having broken the peace with the Scots, was renewing the second of those wars named Episcopal," but exactly a twelvemonth previous to that time, and about eight months before the meeting of the Short Parliament. It is not improbable that his father had disposed of the house at Horton during his son's absence, and gone to reside with his son Christopher, with whom we find him living in Reading, at a somewhat later period. Milton therefore, who had now a large collection of books, and who expected more every day from Italy, and for this and probably other reasons did not wish to live out of London, hired apartments for himself in that city.

It was probably very soon after his return that he wrote his beautiful Latin poem, the *Epitaphium Damonis*, to commemorate the virtues of his early friend Charles Diodati, who had died apparently in the preceding spring, while the poet was enjoying the delights

* *Defensio Secunda.*

of Florence. Though he tells us himself* that “he received the intelligence while he was abroad,” his biographers assure us that he did not hear of it till his return.

Milton was now arrived at the close of his thirty-first year; the allowance made him by his father placed him at least in independent circumstances; nature had not qualified him to take an active part in public affairs, for his delight was in the studious shade of retirement; but still, to live entirely to himself in literary selfishness would in his eyes have been a gross dereliction of duty. “Things,” says he,† “being in such a disturbed and fluctuating state, I looked about to see if I could get any place that would hold myself and my books, and so I took a house of sufficient size in the city; and there, with no small delight, I resumed my intermittent studies; cheerfully leaving the event of public affairs, first to God, and then to those to whom the people had committed that task.” We may here observe, that the house of which he speaks was not his first residence in London after his return from the Continent. His nephew informs us, that he took apartments (probably the whole upper part of the house) in the house of one Russell, a tailor, in St. Bride’s churchyard, Fleet-street. As his sister, Mrs. Phillips, had married a second time, and perhaps was not in very affluent circumstances, he kindly undertook to relieve her of the burden of her younger son John, then a smart clever boy of nine years of age, taking him “to his own charge and care,” as his other

* “Thyrsis, animi causa profectus peregre, de obitu Damonis nuncium accepit. Demum postea reversus, et rem ita esse comperto, se suamque solitudinem hoc carmine deplorat.”—*Argum. Epit. Damonis.*

† *Defensio Secunda.*

nephew expresses it,—that is, keeping and educating him at his own expense.

He did not remain long in these lodgings, for finding them too confined, or more probably being, as we shall see, urged by his friends to extend his sphere of usefulness, he left them some time early in 1640, and took what was called a garden-house,—*i. e.* a house standing detached in an enclosed garden, of which there were many such at that time in London. It stood at the end of an entry in Aldersgate-street, “and therefore,” says Phillips, “the fitter for his turn by the reason of the privacy, besides that there were few streets in London more free from noise than that.”* Here his elder nephew Edward Phillips was, he tells us, “put to board with him;” and, in addition to his nephews, he was induced to receive a few more pupils, the sons of his intimate friends, for whom we are to suppose he was liberally remunerated. We are not informed of the number or the names of these, but the number of course could not have been large.

His course of education was a very extensive one, by far too much so for the ordinary order of minds. But it was also, in our opinion, an erroneous one; as, by putting authors of an inferior order into the hands of youth, the opportunity of forming a pure and correct taste was lost, and by giving the preference to works of science, the culture of the imagination, which is such a source of pure happiness at all periods of life, was nearly altogether neglected. Where a poet was the teacher,

* Mr. Hunter (Milton, p. 26) having given the names of those who lived in the same street, among whom was Milton’s old master Dr. Gill and Sir Thomas Cecil, observes that “Milton’s house was situated in what, in modern phrase, would be called a genteel part of the town.”

one might have expected that Homer, Virgil, “the lofty grave tragedians,” Horace, and Ovid, would have stood in the foremost rank. But no; their names do not even occur in the list of authors given by Phillips, as those read by himself and his fellow-pupils under the eye of the author of *Comus*. These were (*credite posteri!*), in Latin, the four Scriptores Rei Rusticæ, Cato, Varro, Palladius, and Columella; great part of Pliny’s Natural History, the medical work of Celsus, Vitruvius, and the Stratagems of Frontinus: to these prose works were added the philosophic poets Lucretius and Manilius. Such was the Latin course; the Greek was, from its very nature, somewhat better. It consisted of Hesiod (probably only the Works and Days), Aratus, Dionysius’ Periegesis, Oppian, Quintus Smyrnæus, and Apollonius Rhodius in poetry; while the prose course contained Plutarch’s *Placita Philosophorum* and *On the Education of Children*, Xenophon’s *Cyropædia* and *Anabasis*, Aelian’s *Tactics*, and the Stratagems of Polyænus. Surely a more preposterous selection never was made! Some of these works even must have been unintelligible to master and pupils alike; such, for example, were the agricultural writers, which can only be understood by one who has a practical acquaintance with agriculture. It seems strange, by the way, that Virgil’s *Georgics* should not have been included in the course. But in it, with one or two exceptions, there is no poet much above mediocrity, and not a single orator or historian.

But this by no means completed the course. Milton taught his pupils the Hebrew language, and its kindred dialects the Chaldee and the Syriac, so far as to “go through the Pentateuch, and gain an entrance into the

Targum,” and they read some chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel in Syriac. He also instructed them in mathematics and astronomy,—the latter, we fear, on the Ptolemaic system.* It must be mentioned to his praise, that he did not neglect the modern languages, for he gave them instructions in both French and Italian; yet here too he adopted the same perverse course, for the book which he read with them in Italian was the Florentine History of Giovanni Villani, and, in French, a great part of Pierre Davitz, the famous geographer of France in his time. A very laudable portion of his course must not be omitted. Every Sunday his pupils read a chapter of the New Testament in Greek, which he then expounded to them; a less useful part was their writing, from his dictation, a portion of a system of divinity which he had compiled from the writings of Fagius and other theologians.

In his treatment of his pupils, Aubrey says, “As he was severe on one hand, so he was most familiar and free in his conversation to those whom he must serve in the way of education;” an account likely enough to be the truth. He set them an example of hard labour and spare diet; but once in every three or four weeks he used to relax and give himself a day of indulgence with some young gentlemen of his acquaintance, “the chief of whom were Mr. Alphry and Mr. Miller, the beaux of those times, but nothing near so bad as those now-a-days,” writes Phillips after the Revolution; “with these gentlemen he made so far free with his body as now and then to keep a gaudy day.”

* The works named by Phillips are: “Uestitius his Arithmetic, Riff’s Geometry, Pitiscus his Trigonometry, and Johannes De Sacro Bosco De Sphæra.”

It has never seemed to enter into the mind of any of Milton's biographers to inquire how he, a single young man, could have kept house with such a number of pupils. Neither Phillips nor Aubrey gives a hint on the subject; but the most probable and rational supposition would be, that he had engaged some pious and respectable matron to act as his housekeeper and manager, and relieve him from domestic cares.*

Johnson,—who omits no occasion of showing his hostility to Milton, who differed so very widely from him in religion and polities, and whose views in both, if not more correct and practical, were as much more elevated as those of a great poet should be over those of a mere moralist,—sneeringly inquires, what man of eminent knowledge and talents proceeded from “this *wonder-working* academy.” As this objection goes on the theory of man’s being the mere creature of education, it is a sufficient reply to observe, that such is not the case, that *doctrina sed vim promovet insitam* is the truth, and that if nature has not given the original powers, no teacher can bring them into existence. We have however no reason to suppose that Milton’s pupils were not superior to what they would have been, if educated at one of the great public schools. Phillips very candidly and justly observes: “If his pupils had received [*i. e.* had been capable of receiving] his documents with the same acuteness of wit and apprehension, the same industry, alacrity, and thirst after knowledge, as the instructor was

* This view appears to be confirmed by a record in the Exchequer (quoted by Mr. Hunter, p. 25) of the names, etc., of the inhabitants of the ward of Aldersgate, in 1641, in which occurs “Jo. Milton, Gent., Jane Yates his servant,” and she is the only servant whose name is mentioned, perhaps as being of a higher order.

indued with, what prodigies of wit* and learning might they have proved!"†

While Milton was thus engaged in training the mind of youth, and instilling into it principles of piety and virtue, the civil and religious despotism under which men had groaned for years reached its close. The monarch, foiled in his efforts to impose this double yoke on his northern subjects, found it necessary to call a Parliament; and on the 3rd of November, 1640, the Long Parliament met at Westminster. Soon were seen Strafford and Laud, the great upholders of the twin despotism, the one perishing on the block, the other a close prisoner in the Tower. Men now might speak and write without danger; and Milton was one of the first to break the silence. In the early part, as it would appear, of 1641, he published a treatise named *Of Reformation in England, and the Causes that hitherto have hindered it*; in two books, written to a Friend. In this same year the learned and excellent Hall, Bishop of Norwich, published, at the request of Laud, *An humble Remonstrance in favour of Episcopacy*; which institution Milton had vigorously assailed. To this an answer was written under the title of *Smectymnuus* (a word composed out of the initials of their names), by five Puritan ministers.‡ Archbishop Ussher, renowned for learning and integrity, then published in reply, *The Apostolical Institution of Episcopacy*; and Milton, whose former tutor

* *Wit* at that time, and perhaps down to the middle of the eighteenth century, retained its original Anglo-Saxon sense of *mind, talent*, and answered to the French *esprit*.

† Aubrey says, that in a year's time he made his nephews capable of interpreting a Latin author at sight.

‡ Stephen Marshall, Edward Calamy, Thomas Young, Matthew Newcomen, and William Spenstow. The *w* in this last was resolved into two *us*.

and friend was one of the Smectymnuans, again buckled on his controversial armour, to engage this doughty champion of prelacy. He published in reply to him, first, a treatise Of Prelatical Episcopacy, and then The Reasons of Church Government urged against Episcopacy. Bishop Hall now produced a defence of his Remonstrance in reply to Smectymnuus ; on which Milton wrote Animadversions. Such was the state of the controversy at the close of the year 1641. In the following year appeared an anonymous reply to the Animadversions, under the title of A Modest Confutation against a Slanderous and Scurrilous Libel, written, as was generally believed, by a son of Bishop Hall's. As in this very intemperate production Milton's private character was assailed, he took occasion to vindicate it in his reply named An Apology for Smectymnuus. With this the controversy terminated. The question which had occupied it, namely the divine origin and the authority of Episcopacy, had been by this time settled in a somewhat different manner by the Parliament.

We do not conceive ourselves to be called on to enter into this controversy, or to give any opinion on the subject. In learning Ussher, in wit and literary talent Hall, were, in Milton's own opinion, superior to their antagonists, and therefore, he says, he came to their aid. But such controversies are to be decided neither by learning nor by wit ; the truth is only to be arrived at by the application of just rules of logic and sound principles of interpretation ; things never in much favour with controversialists we must confess, and never less so than at that time, when he who could bring into the field the largest park of book-artillery and of authorities was generally regarded as the victor.

Milton thus gives his reasons for engaging in the controversy.* “As soon as liberty, at least of speech, began to be conceded, all mouths were opened against the bishops ; some complained of the faults of the men, others of those of the order itself, and that we alone differed from all the other Reformed churches, and said that the Church ought to be guided after the example of our brethren, but chiefly after the Word of God. Aroused at this when I saw the true path to liberty taken, and men proceeding in the best manner from this beginning, with these steps, to free from servitude the whole of human life, if a discipline originating in religion should flow to the manners and institutions of the Commonwealth ; when even from my younger days I had so prepared myself that above all things I should not be ignorant of anything relating to divine or human laws, and had asked myself if ever I should be of any use if I were now wanting to my country, nay, rather to the Church and to so many brethren who were exposing themselves to danger for the sake of the Gospel,—I resolved, although I was then meditating some other things, to transfer hither all my mental power and industry.” **16614**

It would appear that it was toward the end of this year, when the royal forces had advanced to Brentford, that Milton wrote his sonnet “Captain or Colonel,” etc.

The year 1643 found Milton at rest from religious controversy, and only occupied with his pupils. We may now therefore suppose him to be revolving in his mind the great poetic work of which he had already given so many intimations, particularly that splendid one in the *Apology for Smeectymnuus* ; his daily and

* *Defensio Secunda.*

nightly thoughts dwelling habitually on the Muses' hill, and thence perhaps at times taking their flight to the highest heaven of heavens, absorbed in dreams of sweet sounds and splendid visions. But, alas for poor human nature! he had at this time ideas of a far more sublunary character, for in this eventful year the quiet garden-house in Aldersgate-street was destined to receive a new inmate. "About Whitsuntide," says Phillips, "he took a journey into the country, nobody about him certainly knowing the reason, or that it was more than a journey of recreation. After a month's stay home he returns a married man, who set out a bachelor; his wife being Mary, the eldest daughter of Mr. Richard Powell, then a Justice of the Peace, of Forest Hill, near Shotover, in Oxfordshire." If we had only this account to guide us, we might say that his marriage was a very precipitate affair indeed, one of those to which the old saying, "Marry in haste and repent at leisure," would apply in its full force. But we have reason to suppose that this was by no means the exact state of the case, and that he had long been well-acquainted with the young lady and her family.

Before we proceed to the consideration of this matter, we must direct the reader's attention to the circumstance of how very little the Civil War seems to have interfered with the relations of social and domestic life. At this time London was the head-quarters of the Parliament, and Oxford those of the King. We might therefore be inclined to regard them as the respective capitals of two belligerent states, between which all civil intercourse had ceased. But not so. We find Milton, a strenuous Parliamentarian, setting out from London as if on a mere country excursion, going through Oxford to the house of

a Royalist, marrying his daughter, remaining there for a month, and then taking her back with him to London, accompanied by many members of her family. Such was the mild and gentle spirit in which that noble civil contest was conducted !*

From the Royalists' Composition Papers, published in 1826, it appears that on the 11th of June, 1627, Richard Powell, of Forest Hill, in the county of Oxford, gent., and William Hearne, of London, citizen and goldsmith, did by their writing or recognizance of the nature of a statute-staple acknowledge themselves to owe unto John Milton, then of the University of Cambridge, gent., son of John Milton, citizen and scrivener of London, the sum of £500, which statute was *defeazanced* for the payment to John Milton, the son, of £312 on the 12th of December then next ensuing. As Milton was in his nineteenth year at the time, we are to suppose that this sum was intended to defray the expenses of the remainder of his time at the University ; and it raises our opinion of his father when we find him thus, to a certain extent, making his son independent of him at that early age. We also learn from this transaction that John Milton, when cast off by his father, did not sever all connection with his native county, from which possibly much of his business came ; for the Powells and Mil-

* See in our History of England the letter of Sir William Waller to his "noble friend" Sir Ralph Hopton, on the breaking out of the war.

" Oh, gran bontà de' cavalieri antiqui !
 Eran rivali, eran di fe diversi,
 E si sentian degli aspri colpi iniqui
 Per tutta la persona aneo dolersi ;
 E pur per selve oscure e calli obliqui
 Insieme van senza sospetto aversi." — *Orl. Fur.* i. 22.

tons, being such close neighbours,* had probably been always on terms of intimacy. Hence perhaps, when Mr. Powell, of Forest Hill, was in want of money, he applied to his old acquaintance the London scrivener.

Mr. Powell never paid this debt ; for in 1650–51 we find Milton asserting on oath, that he had received only about £180, “in part of satisfaction of his said just and principal debt, with damages for the same, and his costs of suit.” We may then suppose that, while residing at Horton, he had to take many a ride over to Forest Hill, and that on his return from the Continent he must have gone down there more than once to try to get his money. He therefore, it is probable, had known Mary Powell from the time she was a child. Whether Milton’s father approved of his choice or not, we have no means of determining ; it would however appear that he gave no opposition. The bridegroom was now in his thirty-fifth year ; the bride was perhaps a dozen years or more younger.

Milton was to have had a fortune of £1000 with his wife, no contemptible sum in those days. But he never got a shilling of it, owing, as we may suppose, to the ruin brought on Mr. Powell by the war. What the personal attractions of the bride were we are not informed, but in all likelihood they were not very great ; for the imagination of poets ‘ sees Helen’s beauty in a brow of Egypt,’ and the objects of their affection are often but scantily furnished by Nature with external charms. As to her mind, it was apparently of no high order ; and she seems to have been one of those women,—more common in England than perhaps in any other country,—of a dull, sluggish temperament, with little powers of conversation,

* Forest Hill is not four miles from Oxford, and Shotover lies directly between them.

and requiring strong external excitement,—such as dancing, for example,—to rouse them to anything like enjoyment. In the works which we shall presently notice he says, evidently alluding to his wife, that “the bashful muteness of a virgin may oftentimes hide all the unloveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation;” and he hints that he had discerned this defect in her previous to his marriage, but that her friends had glossed it over. He also speaks of a “mute and spiritless mate;” and again, puts the case of a man who “shall find himself bound fast to an image of earth and phlegm, with whom he looked to be the copartner of a sweet and gladsome society.”

In the course of the summer Milton returned with his bride to his house and pupils in London. “Some few of her nearest relations,” says Phillips, “accompanied the bride to her new habitation, which, by reason the father nor anybody else were yet come, was able to receive them; where the feasting held for some days in celebration of the nuptials, and for entertainment of the bride’s friends.” A few weeks after there came an invitation to her from her family, probably suggested by herself, to go back and spend some time in the country. To this apparently unreasonable request her husband gave a willing consent, only desiring her to be back at Michaelmas. The period fixed arrived, but no sign of the return of Mrs. Milton. Her husband wrote again and again, but his letters were unanswered; he then sent a special messenger, “who, to the best of my remembrance,” says Phillips, “reported that he was dismissed with some sort of contempt;” and thus all the poet’s perhaps high-built hopes of conjugal felicity were rudely cast down and scattered to the winds.

In the above quotation from Phillips, it is observed that his father had not at that time come to reside with him. We have seen that the old gentleman lived at Reading, with his younger son ; but in the preceding month of April this town had surrendered to the troops of the Earl of Essex ; and the derangement in the affairs of Christopher Milton caused by this event, probably making it inconvenient for his father to remain with him any longer, he came and took up his abode in the house of his eldest son in London. Of the exact time of his coming we are not informed, but it was probably after the departure of his daughter-in-law. Phillips says that “the old gentleman lived wholly retired to his rest and devotion, without the least trouble imaginable.”

To return to our poet’s connubial affairs. Various reasons have been assigned for this most extraordinary conduct of Mrs. Milton and her family. Phillips, who we are to recollect was living in his uncle’s house at the time, explains it in the following manner : “The family,” he says, “being generally addicted to the Cavalier party, and some of them possibly engaged in the King’s service,—who by this time had his head-quarters at Oxford, and was in some prospect of success,—they began to repent them of having matched the eldest daughter of the family to a person so contrary to them in opinion ; and thought that it would be a blot on their escutcheon whenever that Court should come to flourish again.” In this way he tries to account for the conduct of her family ; with respect to his young aunt herself, he intimates that the quiet and seclusion of her husband’s abode were not agreeable to one who had been used to the rude merriment and joviality of the house of a country squire of those days. Aubrey’s account is, that she “was brought

up and bred where there was a great deal of company and merriment, as dancing, etc.; and when she came to live with her husband she found it solitary; no company came to her; and she often heard her nephews cry and be beaten. This life was irksome to her, and so she went to her parents; he sent for her home after some time. As for wronging his bed, I never heard the least suspicion of that; nor had he of that any jealousy." When to these accounts we add that Milton was perhaps, as he is described to be, rather "a harsh and choleric man," there may be little difficulty in explaining the conduct of his wife.

Milton was not a man to sit down tamely under an insult of this nature. He set himself forthwith to consider the questions of marriage and divorce in all their bearings, and he arrived at the conclusion that there were other cases, beside the admitted ones, in which the nuptial tie might be dissolved. In the year 1644 he gave to the world his views on the subject, in a treatise addressed to the Parliament, and entitled 'The Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce'; at first anonymously; but to a second edition in the same year he prefixed his name. Having, a little time after the publication of this treatise, discovered that the celebrated Martin Bucer had, in a work addressed to the young King Edward VI., treated of the subject of divorce, and arrived at the same conclusions with himself, he published, under the title of 'The Judgement of Martin Bucer touching Divorce,' a synopsis, or epitome, of that portion of his work, with a preface and postscript.

Great was the wrath and fury of the Presbyterian clergy, who were now in the ascendant, and were fully as intolerant and as impatient of opposition as the

Episcopalian had been. Foul language flowed in abundance, but mingled with little argument, for they preferred the simpler confutation of force. By their influence the author was summoned to the bar of the House of Lords, whence however he was honourably dismissed. In a sermon preached before the two Houses of Parliament, on the 13th of August, 1644, Herbert Palmer, B.D., a member of the Assembly of Divines, expressed his indignation at their suffering such a work to exist : “A wicked book,” said he, “is abroad and uncensured, though deserving to be burnt ; whose author hath been so impudent as to set his name to it, and dedicate it to yourselves.” Others took the short road of treating it as “an error so gross as to need no other confutation” than the mere mention of it,—a convenient mode of argument in use at all times among those who are determined not to be convinced, reason the reasoner ever so strongly.

In the following year Milton published on the same subject a treatise named *Tetrachordon*, in which he examines and expounds the four chief places in Scripture which treat of marriage or nullities of marriage ; and this was followed by *Colasterion*, a reply to a nameless answer to the *Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce*. Thus ended the controversy, but Milton retained his opinions to the end of his life.

His efforts to have a change made in the law of marriage and divorce were, as might be expected, a complete failure ; though he made some proselytes, on whom the title of *Miltonists* was bestowed. We are not however to infer that his cause was bad, or his arguments feeble ; he had high authorities on his side, and nothing was brought against him but virulent declamation, pointless ridicule, and the *vis inertiae* of long-established prejudice.

We shall, when we arrive at the proper place, give a sketch of his opinions on the subject, and the arguments by which he supported them.

But his whole time was not devoted to this subject. In 1644 he gave to the light, at the request of his friend Mr. Samuel Hartlib, a tractate on Education; and in this year also he addressed to the Parliament his Areopagitica, a Speech for the Liberty of Unlicensed Printing, the noblest and most useful of his prose works. In 1645 he published a volume of poems; and as it contains the sonnets to A virtuous Young Lady and to The Lady Margaret Ley, they had been of course written by this time. In this same year he composed the two sonnets on the ill-success of his efforts in the cause of matrimonial liberty, and one to his friend Henry Lawes, on the publishing of his Airs. To this period perhaps we may assign also that to his friend Lawrence, and the first of those to Cyriac Skinner.

As to Milton's mode of life at this period we have little information. His literary labours and his pupils must have engrossed the far greater portion of his time. He had a select circle of friends whom he used to visit. Among these we find particular mention of Lady Margaret Ley, to whom, as we have seen, he addressed one of his sonnets. Still he may have found his domestic life irksome for want of a suitable companion; so, regarding his union with Miss Powell as terminated by her obstinate desertion of him, he began to look out for some more suitable person with whom he might renew the nuptial tie. The lady on whom he fixed his choice, and to whom he actually paid his addresses, was the daughter of a Dr. Davis. She was, as we are assured, both beautiful and accomplished, but of the full meaning of

these words we have no means of judging, as they are in themselves indefinite; and at the present day we know that in newspaper parlance all brides of the better classes are lovely and accomplished, as it were, by patent. As little can we determine how these addresses were received by Miss Davis and her friends, but we should suppose not very favourably; for however they might be convinced of the soundness of the suitor's views on the subject of divorce, still, as the law then stood,—and there seemed to be little chance of its being altered,—the issue of such a marriage would be held to be illegitimate. Add to this, that the lady would in all probability have been quite excluded from the society of her own sex—a thing few virtuous women can patiently endure. Accordingly, as Phillips tells us, she was “averse, as 'tis said, to this motion.”

The experiment however was not to be made. On the 13th of June, 1645, the fatal battle of Naseby was fought, and the Royal affairs went rapidly to ruin. The Powell family, it is probable, soon saw that it would be their interest to have a friend on the side now triumphant, and deemed it a matter of prudence to endeavour to effect a reconciliation between Milton and his wife. The lady herself probably had heard of his addresses to Miss Davis, and her jealousy was excited; for there are women who can do very well without the society of a lover or a husband, but who cannot endure the idea of its being enjoyed by another. Milton's own friends also, it is probable, thought it would be far better and more becoming, that he should be reconciled to his lawful wedded wife, than engaged in a union with another which the law would not recognize. Accordingly when one day he was paying a visit at the house of one of his

relations, named Blackborough, in the lane of St. Martin's-le-Grand, his wife, who had been stationed for the purpose in an inner room, came forth, and throwing herself on her knees before him, implored his forgiveness. At first, calling to mind her heartless and insulting abandonment of him, he refused to grant it; but finally, moved probably by her tears,—for though we are not told so, as a woman she must have called them to her aid,*—and by the recollection of former love and endearments, and by the entreaties and remonstrances of mutual friends, his heart at length relented, and he took her once more to his bosom.† His forgiveness, we have no doubt, was complete and absolute, as suited his noble nature; but that, to use the language of our friend the Rev. Mr. Mitford, “his marriage, though clouded over in its rise, and portending storms and sorrows, ended in the smiles of renewed affection, in conjugal endearments, and continued love,” we are rather inclined to doubt. Mrs. Milton could not change her natural disposition, and that, we know, was not by any means adapted to that of her husband; and from some passages of his subsequent poetry we might be led to infer, that his married state was very far from being one of unalloyed felicity.‡

Milton, who seems to have been fond of changing his residences, or who perhaps found his present house too small for the augmented number of his pupils,§ had just

* Richardson tells us she *did* shed tears; and Wood, that she pleaded “that her mother had been the chief promoter of her forwardness.”

† There can be hardly a doubt that, as has often been observed, he had this scene in his mind when composing *Paradise Lost*, x. 937, *seq.*

‡ See Note E. at the end of this Part.

§ Wood says, “that after the publication of his work on Education, the Earl of Barrymore was sent to him by his aunt Lady Ranelagh, and he also had Sir Thomas Gardiner, of Essex.” Lady Ranelagh also placed her own son Richard Jones under him. Four of his Latin

at this time taken a house in Barbican ; and as this was not yet ready, instead of taking his wife home to her former abode, he placed her for the present in the house of a friend.*

Among the documents in the State-Paper Office is a Protection, signed T. Fairfax, and bearing date the 27th of June, 1646, granted to Mr. R. Powell, of Forest Hill, "who was in the city and garrison of Oxford at the surrender thereof," empowering him "without let or interruption to pass the guards, with his servants, horses, arms, goods, and all other necessaries ; and to repair unto London or elsewhere upon his necessary occasions ; and to have full liberty at any time within six months, to go to any port, and to transport himself, with his servants, goods, and necessaries, beyond seas." The use Mr. Powell made of this protection was to remove, with his wife and his large family of children, to London, where they were all received into the house of his generous son-in-law. It was probably soon after their arrival that Milton's first child, a daughter named Anne, was born, on the 29th of July. His wife's family appear to have remained with him for some months, for her father died at his house, in or about the following New-Year's Day ;† soon after which probably his widow and children, their affairs being settled in some measure, may have returned to Forest Hill. After their departure, the house, says Phillips, "looked again like a house of the Muses."

letters are addressed to this young man. Phillips tells us that "the accession of scholars was not great."

* This, Phillips informs us, was "the Widow Webber's house, in St. Clement's Churchyard, whose second daughter had been married to the other brother many years before."

† See Note F. at the end of this Part.

In the beginning of the following year, January 23, 1646-7, Milton wrote his last Latin poem, the irregular ode sent to John Rouse, the Keeper of the Bodleian Library at Oxford, in a copy of his poems. It was in the course of this year also that his venerable father paid the debt of nature. Toward the end of the year,* Milton,—as the number of his family, and probably also that of his pupils, was reduced,—finding his house in Barbican to be larger than he required, left it and went to reside in a smaller house in Holborn, which opened backwards into Lincoln's Inn Fields. Here his second child, also a daughter, and named Mary after her mother, was born, on the 25th of October, 1648.

Phillips says, “he is much mistaken, if there was not about this time a design of making him an adjutant-general in Sir William Waller’s army. But the new-modeling of the army proved an obstruction to the design.” Of the correctness of this statement some of the biographers doubt, because Waller was a Presbyterian; and as Milton had broken with that party, he could not serve under him with honour. There is however a much simpler answer. Waller had not and could not have any command at the time; for the New Model and the Self-denying Ordinance had taken place early in 1645; so that if any such offer was made to Milton, which is not very likely, it must have been before that year.

Milton seems to have been now employed on his History of England, as the four first books of it were written before the year 1649. His only effort in poetry was a version of nine of the Psalms, executed in 1648.

When the Independent and military faction had

* Phillips says, “not long after the march of Fairfax and Cromwell through the City,” which was on the 7th of August, 1647.

brought their King to trial and to the scaffold, the Presbyterians raised a great outcry at the deed. Milton, who bore them a private grudge, and who was in general disgusted with their hypocrisy and tyranny, published in the month after the death of the King a piece named *The Tenure of Kings and Magistrates*, in which he undertook to prove that subjects have a right in certain cases to depose, and even put to death, a tyrant or wicked king ; and then to show, that it was *they* who deposed and, in effect, put the King to death. He also published at this time, *Observations on the Articles of Peace* which the Earl of Ormond had lately concluded in the King's name with the Irish Catholics.

Royalty having been abolished, England was now to form a Commonwealth, presided over by a Council of State. As the republics of ancient Greece and Italy were the great objects of admiration to all Anti-Royalists at this time, it was deemed that the Commonwealth of England, which trod in their footprints, ought to use their language in its intercourse with foreign States ; and as Greek, from its difficulty and other obvious causes, was out of the question, the Council of State fixed on the Latin, then in general use among men of learning in their personal intercourse and correspondence. The office of Secretary for Foreign Tongues, as it was termed, was offered to Milton without any solicitation, or even knowledge, on his part. His two late seasonable pieces had probably drawn attention to him ; he was known to be a distinguished scholar, acquainted with both ancient and modern languages ; and finally, Bradshaw, the President of the Council, was his kinsman or connection. The offer, as appears from the Book of Orders, of the Council of State, was made to him on the 13th of March or the

day following ; and he seems not to have hesitated about accepting it, as the 15th is the date of his appointment. From the Book of Orders we may infer that his place was no sinecure, and that he was kept pretty well occupied. A portion of his occupation this year, in the service of the Parliament, was to write a reply to the work named *Ikon Basiliké*, which, passing under the name of the late King, was going through numerous editions, and rendering great service to the Royal cause. His reply was named *Iconoclastes*, or *Image-breaker*.

There is no doubt whatever that that daring act of folly, as we may perhaps term it, of the English Parliament, the execution of their King, had aroused throughout Europe a strong feeling of horror and indignation. Excited probably more by this feeling than by the alleged gift of one hundred gold Jacobuses from the son of that unhappy monarch, Claude de Saumaise, or, as he Latinized his name, *Salmasius*, one of the most distinguished scholars in Europe, published at the close of this year a piece named *Defensio Regia pro Carolo Primo ad Carolum Secundum*, in which he boldly and openly asserted the divine right of kings, and their accountability to God alone for their actions. As the name of the author, independently of the merits of the subject and the execution, was sure to draw much attention to the work, and so might prejudice the cause of the Parliament, the Council, on the 8th of January, 1649–50, made an Order that “ Mr. Milton do prepare something in answer to the book of *Salmasius*;” and we find another Order of the 23rd of the following December, “ that Mr. Milton do print the treatise which he hath written,” etc.

This was his celebrated, his noble *Defensio pro Populo Anglicano* ; in which, though he certainly goes much

further than any one of sound sense and judgement will agree to accompany him, in justifying the late act of the dominant party, every true friend of man must admire the clear and vigorous manner in which he asserts and proves that the people are the true source of power, and that to *them* the holders of it are accountable for its exercise. The impression made by this treatise was great; the general feeling on the Continent had been adverse to the Parliament, and the name of their advocate was little known; but, perhaps in some measure owing to the reputation of Salmasius, it speedily found readers, and consequently admirers. Milton himself tells us, that soon after its publication he received the congratulations of all the Foreign Ministers in London, who, with two or three exceptions, must have been those of crowned heads.

It must be recorded to Milton's honour, that though his sight had been decaying for some years, and his physicians assured him that if he undertook this work he would become totally blind, he nobly resolved to sacrifice what may be regarded as the greatest of earthly blessings, to what he deemed a sacred duty. He wrote the Defence, and the prediction of the physicians was verified.

In the course of this year appeared a reply to the Defence, which Milton erroneously ascribed to Bishop Bramhall, but whose real author was a clergyman of the name of Rowland. To this an answer, also in Latin, was made by Milton's younger nephew John Phillips, now only in his twentieth year, but which was so carefully revised and corrected by Milton before it went to press, that it may in effect be regarded as his own work. There were some other answers attempted to the Defence, but of these its author took no notice. A truce

now prevailed for a short time, after which he returned to the field against a new adversary.

In an Order of Council, dated November 12, 1649, it is “ordered that Sir John Hippesley be spoken to that Mr. Milton may be accommodated with those lodgings that he hath at Whitehall;” and on the 19th it is ordered that Milton shall be put in possession of them. By a warrant, dated June 18, 1650, the trustees and contractors for the sale of the late King’s goods are directed “to deliver to Mr. John Milton, or to whom he shall appoint, such hangings as shall be sufficient for the furnishing of his lodgings at Whitehall.” We afterwards meet another Order, dated April 10, 1651, in which Mr. Vaux is directed “to forbear the removing of Mr. Milton out of his lodgings in Whitehall until Sir Henry Mildmay and Sir Gilbert Pickering shall have spoken with the committee concerning that business.” On the 11th of June it was ordered that a committee should go “to the Committee of Parliament for Whitehall to acquaint them with the case of Mr. Milton, in regard of their positive order for his speedy remove out of his lodgings in Whitehall; and to endeavour with them that the said Mr. Milton may be continued where he is, in regard of the employment which he is in to the Council, which necessitates him to reside near the Council.”

It thus appears that Milton had apartments given to him by the Parliament when appointed to his office; and as we are told that before he went to them he lodged at one Thomson’s, next door to the Bull-head Tavern, Charing Cross, opening into the Spring Garden,* we may

* Phillips. He is mistaken in saying that it was at Thomson’s he wrote his *Defensio*; for he must have quitted his house in November, and it was not till the following January that he was directed to write it.

infer that he was required to move before his official residence, which was in Scotland-yard, was ready. Why he was deprived, as he seems to have been, of these apartments, we are not informed. Phillips would seem to have been ignorant of this fact, for he says : “From his apartments in Scotland-yard, whether Milton thought it not healthy or otherwise convenient for his uses, or whatever else was the reason, he soon after took a pretty garden-house in Petty France, in Westminster, next door to the Lord Scudamore’s, opening into St. James’s Park.” In this last residence, we may observe, he remained till the Restoration. It may also be noted, that while he was living in Scotland-yard, and engaged on his Defence, his wife was delivered, on the 6th of March, 1650, of a son, who died soon after his birth.

It has been asserted that Milton received £1000 from the Government for his Defence. Of this there is no proof, neither is it very likely, as the Council, which was by no means noted for liberality, probably looked upon it merely as a part of the duties of his office ; in fact, he himself denies it.* They however gave him what cost them nothing—their thanks. In the Council Book may be seen as follows : “1651. June 18. Ordered that thanks be given to Mr. Milton, on the behalfe of the Commonwealth, for his good services done in writing an answer to the booke of Salmasius, written against the proceedings of the Commonwealth of England.” This however is cancelled, as well as three lines following, in which a grant of money is made to him ; and then comes a regular uncancelled entry in these words : “The Councell takeing notice of the manie good services performed by

* “Tuque scito illas *opimitates atque opes*, quas mihi exprobras, non attigisse, neque eo nomine, quo maxime accusas, obolo factum ditiorem.”
—Def. Sec.

Mr. John Milton, their Secretarie for Forreigne Languages, to this State and Commonwealth, particularlie for his booke in vindication of the Parliament and people of England against the calumnies and invectives of Salmasius, have thought fit to declare their resentment and good acceptance of the same, and that the thanks of the Councell bee returned to Mr. Mylton, and their sense represented in that behalfe.”*

We find nothing more of any importance respecting Milton till the 2nd of May, 1652, when his wife lay-in of her fourth child, a daughter, named Deborah, at his house in Petty France. Mr. Godwin† asserts, without any authority, that it was on this occasion that he became a widower; but as Milton registered the birth of his daughter with his own hand,‡ it is probable that if

* It would seem, from the difference of the orthography and the more ambitious style, that the change of mind in the Council had been effected by some person or persons who was not present when the fit of liberality was on them. A report may hence have been spread that Milton got a solid reward for his work. The word *resentment* is used in the French sense.

† Lives of Edward and John Phillips. Mr. Hunter (Milton, p. 34) makes a similar assertion. He supposes Mrs. Milton to have been about thirty years of age at the time.

‡ Dr. Birch transcribed the following account of the births of Milton's children, “thus registered,” says he, “by himself in the blank leaf of his wife's Bible:”—

“Anne, my daughter, was born July the 29th, the day of the monthly fast, between six and seven, or about half an hour after six in the evening, 1646. Mary, my daughter, was born on Wednesday, October the 25th, on the fast-day, in the morning, about six of the clock, 1648. My son John was born on Saturday, March the 16th, about half an hour past nine at night, 1650. My daughter Deborah was born the 2nd of May, being Sunday, somewhat before three or four of the clock in the morning, 1652.”

It is strange that this curious document is unnoticed by the biographers subsequent to Birch; Symmons took dates from it without giving his authority.

it had been followed by the death of his wife, he would have noticed that event also. On the other hand however, it may be objected that he has not noted the death of his infant son. The matter therefore must remain in obscurity.

Some time in this year (1652) there was published a work named *Regii Sanguinis Clamor ad Cœlum*, etc., full of the most virulent invective against the English nation, and of the foulest calumnies of Milton personally. Its author was Peter Du Moulin, a Frenchman by birth, but settled in England. Being afraid to publish it in his own name, he transmitted his manuscript to Salmasius, who committed the charge of putting it through the press to a man of some literary eminence named Moore, or Latinized Morus, of Scottish origin, and then Principal of the Protestant College of Castres, in Languedoc. The work did not bear Morus' name any more than Du Moulin's. He only wrote a dedication to the exiled King, in the name of Adrian Ulac, the printer. Milton however heard of Morus' connection with the work, and he naturally supposed him to be the author. In his *Defensio Secunda*, which did not appear till 1654, he lashes him in a merciless manner, on account of the failings of his private character. At the same time he enters into a noble defence of his own, which had been assailed with such virulence; and in his vindication of that of his country, he makes a splendid panegyric of some of the most distinguished servants of the Parliament. Morus attempted a reply in his *Fides Publica*, which was answered by Milton in his Author's *Pro se Defensio*, in 1655. To this Morus rejoined in a *Supplementum*, and a *Responsio* from Milton terminated the controversy.

In the year 1652, or the following year, two important events occurred in the life of Milton,—the death of his wife, and the total loss of his sight. As to the former, if the supposition above-mentioned be incorrect, Mrs. Milton, who probably nursed Deborah, as she may be presumed to have nursed all her children, did not probably lie-in again till the end of 1653, or the early part of 1654, at which time she lost her life in giving birth to a fifth child ; and Milton thus was deprived of a helpmate, ill-suited to him no doubt, but one who probably had managed his household concerns well, and who was therefore no small loss to him, now that he was bereaved of vision.

The date of his total blindness is also uncertain. We have seen that in May, 1652, he was able to write ; and if, as seems to be the case, the letter written by him to Bradshaw in favour of Andrew Marvell, dated February the 21st, 1652–3, be in his own handwriting, he could not have been totally blind in the early part of 1653. His biographers however with tolerable unanimity assert that his sight was wholly gone in 1652, because Du Moulin in his work published that year upbraids him with his blindness, and that, in a letter from the Hague, dated 20th June, 1653, in Thurloe's State Papers, he is spoken of as “*un aveugle nommé Milton.*” This last authority however goes for nothing, as he may have been blind at the time it was written ; and as to the former, we may observe that a charge of blindness does not imply a total want of vision, for even short-sighted people are sometimes termed blind.

In a letter dated September 28, 1654, and addressed to Leonard Philares, a learned Athenian, envoy from the Duke of Parma at the Court of France,—who had re-

quested a statement of his case, that he might lay it before Thevenot, who was then in great repute for his treatment of diseases of the eye,—Milton says that, about ten years before, he had felt his sight beginning to decay, while at the same time he was troubled with flatulence and indigestion, and whenever he looked at a candle he saw an *iris* about it. Soon after, the left side of his left eye, the one first affected, became so clouded that he could discern nothing at that side; and when he closed his right eye, objects appeared to him with their magnitude reduced. His right eye also had been declining for three years before he became quite blind, and during the latter months of that period objects used to swim before him, and he felt, especially after his meals, a sense of oppression and drowsiness, and when he retired to bed and closed his eyes, a copious light used to flash in them, followed by vivid colours; but all this ceased as soon as his sight was entirely gone. It is quite plain then that his disease was the paralysis of the optic nerve, named *gutta serena*, from an erroneous idea of its cause.

We now have Milton in the year 1654 totally blind, with three little girls, the eldest not eight, the youngest not two years old, while his time was in a great measure engrossed by his public avocations. It is strange that it never seems to have entered into the mind of his nephew to inform us, or of his biographers to inquire, how he managed his domestic concerns under these circumstances. The most natural supposition would be, that he got some respectable matron to take the charge of his family; but we fear that the truth is that he did not act so prudently, but, to the manifest injury of his daughters, d d as well as he could with ordinary servants.

He probably soon grew weary of this unpleasant mode

of life, and perhaps was anxious to give his daughters the advantage of a mother's care; for on the 12th of November, 1656, he entered a second time into the bands of matrimony. His wife's name was Catherine, daughter of Captain Woodcock, of Hackney. The marriage was performed according to the civil service then in use, "by Sir John Dethicke, knight and alderman, by the then Act of Parliament, after the publications of their agreement and intention on three market-days."* It is possible that on this occasion also Milton, like his Samson, married out of his own tribe; for among those arrested for a Royalist conspiracy against Cromwell in 1658, we find the name of Captain Woodcock. He may however have been a different person from Milton's father-in-law, and we doubt if a Royalist or a Presbyterian† would have been content with a merely civil marriage. With his new wife however Milton seems to have enjoyed connubial bliss; but his enjoyment was of brief duration, for only fifteen months after her marriage, she also died in childbed of a daughter, who did not survive her. This melancholy event occurred in the beginning of February, 1657-8. A beautiful sonnet by her husband embalms her memory, and ever, we are confident, will preserve it from decay; for even the tasteless Johnson, though grudgingly, gives it praise.

We may here pause and inquire a little into Milton's office of Foreign Secretary. We have seen that he was appointed to it early in 1649, and that toward the end of that year he was assigned apartments at Whitehall,

* Gentleman's Magazine, 1840, June, p. 598, quoted by Todd.

† "The only Captain Woodcock of the Civil War times, with whose name I am acquainted, is a Captain John Woodcock, who, on October 6, 1653, gives a receipt to the Treasurer-at-War on the disbanding of his troop."—*Hunter, Milton*, p. 35.

which were afterwards taken from him without any reason being given. The amount of his salary is nowhere expressly mentioned. It is only said in the Order of Council "that he have the same salarie which Mr. Weecherlyn formerly had for the same service," but what that salary was is not specified. We shall see however presently that Milton's salary was nearly £300 a year. Like Blake and other sincere friends of their country, he acquiesced in, or rather approved of, Cromwell's assumption of the sole authority in the State; and he was by him continued in office. In an Order in Council, dated April 17, 1655, for the reduction of salaries, it is directed "that the former yearly salary of Mr. John Milton of £288, etc.* . . . be reduced to £150 per annum, and paid to him *during his life* out of his Highness' Exchequer." As among the warrants which his Highness is in this Order advised to issue for the payment of salaries there is one "for the fee of Mr. Philip Meadows, Secretary for the Latin Tongue, after the rate of £200 per annum," it has been inferred that Milton's was a retiring pension, and that Meadows had taken the place at a reduced salary. But this cannot be the case, for the payment to Meadows is for past services.† It would seem therefore to be the fact that Meadows had been for some time joint secretary with Milton, and that the

* In an Order of Feb. 13, 1653-4, signed OLIVER P., there is "Mr. John Milton for halfe a yeare, from 4th July to the first of Jan. last inclusive, at 15*s.* 10*½ d.* per diem, £14*4s.* 9*d.* 3*d.*"

† Meadows had been for some time in employment, for we find among the Orders of Council, "1653. Oct. 17. Ordered that Mr. Philip Meadows, now employed by the Councell in Latin translations, doe alsoe assist Mr. Thurloe in the dispatch of the Forreigne businesse; and that he have in consideration thereof one hundred pounds per annum, to be added to the one hundred pounds per annum he now receives of the Councell."

latter was now relieved from the ordinary business of the office, and was only to be required to give his aid when papers of importance were to be written. It is certain that he continued to write State-papers up to the year of the Restoration.

It would seem however that this reduction of his salary did not take place to the extent proposed ; for on the 25th of October, 1659, there is an Order for the payment of John Milton and Andrew Marvell at the rate of £200 a year each. Marvell had then succeeded Meadows, and probably through Milton's influence ; for there is a letter from him to Bradshaw so far back as Feb. 21, 1652-3, in which he recommended him for the situation. “ If,” says he, “ upon the death of Mr. Wakerley [Wecherlyn] the Council shall think that I shall need any assistant in the performance of my place,—though for my part I find no encumbrances of that which belongs to me except it be in point of attendance at conferences with ambassadors, which I must confess, in my condition, I am not fit for,—it would be hard for them to find a man so fit every way for that purpose as this gentleman.” It therefore appears that Wecherlyn did not go out of office, but remained as assistant to Milton ;* and that on his death the Council, or rather Cromwell, who then had the supreme power, appointed Meadows to the vacant situation.

There is no doubt but that the arrangement effected in 1655 left Milton more time at his own disposal. He appears to have devoted it partly to his History of England, partly to the making collections for a copious Latin

* “ 1652. April 7. Ordered that the answer to the King of Denmark, now read, bee approved of, and translated into Latine by Mr. Wecherlyn.”

dictionary, and for framing a Body of Divinity out of the Bible, and finally to the composing of the great poem, on the subject of which he had fixed at last after long hesitation.* These however did not occupy him wholly. In 1658 he published a manuscript of Sir Walter Raleigh's, named *The Cabinet Council*; and in the following year he printed a Treatise of Civil Power in Ecclesiastical Causes; and another, Considerations touching the Means of removing Hirclings out of the Church. He wrote also, but did not publish, *A Letter to a Friend concerning the Ruptures of the Commonwealth*, and *The present Means and Brief Delineation of a Free Commonwealth*, in a letter addressed to General Monk.† In 1660, when the Restoration seemed almost inevitable, he made a final effort against monarchy, in a piece also addressed to Monk, entitled *The ready and easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth*. But all was in vain. The nation was weary of turmoil, and anxious to return to its former condition. The Royalists, seeing the state of the public mind, took courage, and the pulpit was once more converted into a political engine. Dr. Matthew Griffith, one of the late King's chaplains, published one of these political sermons which he had preached at Mereers' Hall; and Milton forthwith sent to the press a reply to it, named *Brief Notes upon a late Sermon titled The Fear of God and the King*. With this piece terminated his career of political controversy.

During the eight years that Milton lived in his house in Petty France he had enjoyed the society of some select friends,—such as Lawrence, Skinner, Marvell,—men of

* Aubrey says he began it two years before the coming-in of the King.

† They were both printed for the first time by Toland.

virtue, talent, and learning. With men of power and political influence he appears to have had little intimacy.* In his Second Defence he terms Col. Overton his friend, and he speaks of Whitlock, Pickering, Strickland, Sydenham, Sydney, Montague, and Lawrence, as known to him by friendship or by fame, which shows that he was intimate with some of them. With Lady Ranelagh, the mother and aunt of two of his former pupils, and sister to Lord Orrery and the celebrated Robert Boyle, he was on terms of close intimacy. He was also visited by distinguished foreigners, many of whom, Aubrey says, came to England for no other purpose but to see Cromwell and Milton. "He was mightily," he says, "importuned to go into France and Italy; foreigners came much to see him, and much admired him; and offered him great preferments to come over to them." How far this account is correct we are unable to say, but certainly the fame of Milton was widely divulged all over Europe.

* In his letter to Heimbach, Dec. 18, 1657, he tells him that he cannot be of any service to him, "propter paucissimas familiaritates meas cum gratiosis."

FOURTH PERIOD.

AFTER THE RESTORATION.

A. D. 1660-1674. A. ZET. 52-66.

As it would not have been safe for the author of *Iconoclastes* and *The Defence of the People of England* to have appeared in public after the return of the King, Milton quitted his house in Petty France, and sought an asylum with a friend who lived in Bartholomew Close, near West Smithfield. His concealment here was complete; perhaps, though a proclamation was issued for his apprehension, no very diligent search was made after him. There were among the Royalists men of humanity who could feel compassion for him who was deprived of Nature's prime blessing, and men of taste who were capable of admiration for exalted genius. The names of Monk's cousin, Secretary Morrice, and his brother-in-law, Sir Thomas Clarges, are mentioned as of those who interested themselves in Milton's favour; Andrew Marvell too, who had a seat in Parliament, is said to have exerted himself in behalf of his friend.* But the chief merit is usually assigned to Sir William Davenant, who, when he had been taken prisoner on his passage from France to America, in 1651, was ordered by the Parlia-

* See Phillips.

ment to be tried for his life by the High Court of Justice, and the interest of Milton was then exerted to save him ; he now, it is said, paid the debt of gratitude.* Perhaps after all it was Monk himself, who we know had wished to have only four persons excepted from indemnity, that caused Milton's name not to appear among the exceptions.

Warton, who we need not say was no lover of Milton, tells us, on the authority of Thyer, who he says had it from good authority, that “when he was under persecution with John Goodwin, his friends, to gain time, made a mock-funeral for him, and that when matters were settled in his favour, and the affair was known, the King laughed heartily at the trick.” This account, improbable as it may appear, receives some confirmation from the fact that it is to be found in a work written long before the time of Thyer or Warton,† and with which neither of them can be supposed to have been acquainted. The story after all is by no means incredible, for Milton's friends might—but assuredly without his knowledge—have had recourse to such an artifice.

On the 16th of June, 1660, the Commons resolved that his Majesty should be “humbly moved to call in Milton's two books [Iconoclastes and The Defence] and that of John Goodwin [The Obstructors of Justice], written in justification of the murder of the late King, and order them to be burnt by the common hangman ; and that the Attorney-General do proceed against them by indictment or otherwise.” On the 27th of

* Richardson, from Pope, who said he had it from Betterton the actor, whose patron Davenant had been. Aubrey, in his MS. Life of Davenant, as Todd observes, ascribes his safety, without any mention of Milton, to two aldermen of York.

† Cunningham's History of Great Britain, i. 14.

August following several copies of these works were committed to the flames. Two days after, the Act of Indemnity was passed, and Milton had nothing more to fear for his life. Yet we find him, for some cause or other, afterwards in the custody of the Sergeant-at-Arms, for there is an order of the 15th of December for his release, paying his fees; and another of the 17th, on his complaint of excessive fees being demanded, directing that inquiry should be made of what is fit to be given to the Sergeant. For his confinement on this occasion no adequate cause has been assigned. Birch conjectures that it was in consequence of the order given by the Commons for his prosecution; but there was no such order, it was merely a motion for an address to the King. We are therefore left in uncertainty. We may now however suppose that Milton's mind was at ease, and that he could give his undivided attention to the great work he had in hand. But if we may credit Richardson's informant, this was by no means the case. "He was," he says, "in perpetual terror of being assassinated; though he had escaped the talons of the law, he had made himself enemies in abundance. He was dejected, he would lie awake at nights," etc. This, he says, Dr. Tancred Robinson had from a relation of Milton's—Mrs. Walker, of the Temple. To us it does not appear to be at all probable.

Milton now took a house in Holborn, near Red Lion-street, but he did not remain long there, it is said; and he removed from it to a house in Jewin-street, near Aldersgate-street, but in what year is uncertain. In 1661 he published, under the title of *Accidence* commenced Grammar, a Latin grammar, which he had probably drawn up while he was engaged in tuition; for,

like a truly wise man, he regarded nothing as mean or insignificant that was useful; and, besides, he seems to have had a sort of predilection for works in which little beyond judgement and the spirit of arrangement could be exhibited. At this time also he published another of Raleigh's manuscripts, named Aphorisms of State.

It was during his residence in Jewin-street, that Milton entered for the third and last time into the married state. The name of the lady was Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. Randolph Minshull, of Wistaston, near Nantwich, in Cheshire, who had been recommended to him by his friend Dr. Paget, to whom she was related. The date of his marriage is uncertain. Aubrey says, it was the year before the sickness, which would place it in 1664; and this perhaps is correct. His bride, as will appear in the sequel, was thirty years younger than himself.*

It may seem strange that Milton, who had remained now for eight years a widower, and whose eldest daughter Anne must have been nearly eighteen years of age,—and therefore, it might be supposed, capable of managing his house, and giving him, with the aid of her sister Mary, now sixteen, the attention which he required in his helpless condition,—should have thought of marrying again. But it appears to have been the conduct of these very daughters that induced him to do so. In the depositions made on the occasion of his will, we find that he was repeatedly heard to say, that “they had been un-

* It has been observed, that Milton's wives were all maidens. In the Apology for Smeectymnuus, when replying to his adversary, who had said, that “a rich widow, or a lecture, or both, would content him,” he says, “I care not, if I tell him thus much professedly,—though it be the losing of my rich hopes, as he calls them,—that I think with them who, both in prudence and elegance of spirit, would chuse a virgin of mean features, honestly bred, before the wealthiest widow.”

dutiful and unkind to him ;” and to complain, that “ they were careless of him, being blind, and made nothing of deserting him.” One witness deposed that “ he had declared to her, that a little before his marriage a former maid-servant of his told his daughter Mary, that she heard he was to be married ;” to which she replied, that “ that was no news, to hear of his wedding ; but if she could hear of his death, that was something :” and that he also told her, that “ they did combine together and counsel his maid-servant to cheat him in her marketings, and that they had made away with some of his books, and would have sold the rest of his books to the dunghill-women.” We may observe, that what is here said can apply only to the two elder daughters, for Deborah was not yet twelve years old. It must also be noted that, by their uncle’s testimony, they all continued to live in his house for five or six years after his marriage. Of what education he gave them, we shall speak in the sequel.

Mrs. Milton,—Betty, as he used to call her,—appears at all events to have made him an excellent wife, and to have contributed largely to the comforts of his declining years, thus justifying the prudence of the hazardous step he had taken in marrying again at this time of life. Not long after this marriage, Milton, through Dr. Paget also, became acquainted with a young Quaker, named Thomas Ellwood, who has left some interesting notices of the illustrious poet.

“ John Milton,” says the *naïf* Friend, “ a gentleman of great note for learning throughout the learned world, having filled a public station in former times, lived now a private and retired life in London ; and, having wholly lost his sight, kept always a man to read to him, which usually was the son of some gentleman of his acquaint-

ance, whom in kindness he took to improve in his learning. By the mediation of my friend Isaac Pennington with Dr. Paget, and of Dr. Paget with John Milton, was I admitted to come to him,—not as a servant to him, which at that time he needed not, nor to be in the house with him ;—but only to have the liberty of coming to his house at certain hours when I would, and to read to him what books he should appoint me, which was all the favour I desired.

“I went therefore and took myself a lodging near to his house, which was then in Jewin-street, as conveniently as I could ; and from thenceforward went every day in the afternoon, except on the first days of the week, and, sitting by him in his dining-room, read to him such books, in the Latin tongue, as he pleased to hear me read.

“At my first sitting to read to him, observing that I used the English pronunciation, he told me, ‘if I would have the benefit of the Latin tongue, not only to read and to understand Latin authors, but to converse with foreigners either abroad or at home, I must learn the foreign pronunciation.’ To this I consenting, he instructed me how to sound the vowels. This change of pronunciation proved a new difficulty to me ; but *Labor omnia vincit Improbus*, and so did I, which made my reading the more acceptable to my master. He, on the other hand, perceiving with what earnest desire I pursued learning, gave me not only all the encouragement, but all the help he could ; for, having a curious ear, he understood by my tone when I understood what I read, and when I did not, and accordingly would stop me, examine me, and open the most difficult passages to me.”

Milton, it appears, did not remain in Jewin-street

long after his marriage. Perhaps the house did not please his wife. At all events, in the spring of 1665 he was living in a small house in Artillery Walk, leading into Bunhill Fields ; “ which,” says Phillips, “ was his last stage in this world.” It would seem most natural, that a man who had his house furnished would of course move at once to his new residence, and transfer thither his furniture. But Richardson tells us, that shortly after his marriage he went to lodge with Millington, the famous book-auctioneer of that time, who lived in Little Britain, and that his host was used to lead him by the hand when walking in the streets. He says he had the account from a person who had often met them. May not however Millington have been only a neighbour or friend, who took pleasure in the society of such a distinguished man ?

When the Plague broke out, in May, 1665, Milton prudently resolved to quit London, and he employed his friend Ellwood, who was now engaged as tutor in the family of a wealthy Quaker, at Chalfont, in Buckinghamshire, to look out for some place for him in his neighbourhood. “ I took a pretty box for him,” says he, “ in Giles Chalfont,* a mile from me, of which I gave him notice, and intended to have waited on him, and seen him well settled in it, but was prevented by imprisonment,”—a thing with which poor honest Ellwood was

* Warton says, “ The house . . . is still standing, small, but pleasantly situated.” Dunster says, “ The adjacent country is indeed extremely pleasant; but the immediate spot is as little picturesque or pleasing as can well be imagined. Immediately in front of the house a grass field rises so abruptly as completely to exclude all prospect; and the common road of the village passes by the gable-end, adjoining to which is the end of a small dwelling, which runs behind that inhabited by Milton.” Prospects however are very indifferent to the blind.

but too familiar, in consequence of the odious persecuting spirit which then prevailed. He however was not long detained in Aylesbury gaol, and “being now released,” he proceeds, “I soon made a visit to him, to welcome him to the country. After some common discourses had passed between us, he called for a manuscript of his, which being brought he delivered to me, bidding me take it home with me, and read it at my leisure ; and when I had so done, return it to him, with my judgement thereupon.

“ When I came home, and set myself to read it, I found it was that excellent poem which he entitled Paradise Lost. After I had with the best attention read it through, I made him another visit, and returned him his book, with due acknowledgment of the favour he had done me in communicating it to me. He asked me how I liked it, and what I thought of it, which I modestly and freely told him ; and after some farther discourse about it, I pleasantly said to him, ‘ Thou hast said much here of Paradise lost, but what hast thou to say of Paradise found ? ’ He made me no answer, but sat some time in a muse, then broke off the discourse, and fell upon another subject.

“ After the sickness was over, and the city well cleansed, and become safely habitable again, he returned thither ; and when, afterwards, I went to wait on him there,—which I seldom failed of doing whenever my occasion led me to London,—he showed me his second poem, called Paradise Regained, and in a pleasant tone said to me, ‘ This is owing to you ; for you put it into my head by the question you put to me at Chalfont, which before I had not thought of.’ ”

From this account we learn, among other interesting

particulars, that in 1665 the *Paradise Lost* was completed; and that in that year, at Chalfont, he composed, or at least may have commenced, the *Paradise Regained*; and from this we may infer, that his amanuenses were probably his wife and daughters.

The pestilence ceased by the end of the year, but probably Milton did not return to London till the spring of 1666. It, in fact, is not unlikely that he had taken the house at Chalfont for a year from Midsummer. We have no information as to where he was at the time of the Great Fire, which broke out in the following month of September; but Bunhill Fields were beyond its range, and so he could not have sustained any injury from its ravages. His last Latin letter, addressed to a learned German, is dated London, August 15, 1666.

Milton having now two poems ready for the press, resolved to proceed to the publication of them, commencing with the *Paradise Lost*, as first in magnitude and in order of time. When we recollect that nearly the whole city of London was burnt in the end of the autumn of 1666, it may surprise us, but at the same time give us a forcible idea of the energy of the English character, to find that the agreement for the sale of this poem to Samuel Simmons is dated April 27, 1667; and our wonder would be raised still higher if the conjecture of Hayley were correct, that it had been already printed at the expense of the author. But this is not by any means a probable supposition.

It is well known that the terms on which this great poem were published were £5 in hand, the same sum on the sale of thirteen hundred copies of the first edition, £5 on the sale of the like number of the second edition, and another £5 after the same sale of the third;

no edition to exceed fifteen hundred copies. So that, on a sale of three thousand five hundred copies, the author was at the utmost only to receive £20! This really seems almost incredible. The book, no doubt, was sold at what we may regard as a very moderate price,—a small quarto, neatly bound, for three shillings; but surely publishing must have been a very poor trade, or Simmons a very dishonest man, which we have no reason to suppose, when the profits on three large editions would enable him to give the author,—whose share publishers at the present day usually calculate at half profits,—only the paltry sum above-mentioned. Such however is the fact.*

This great poem even ran a chance of not being allowed to appear in print. Cromwell had magnanimously adopted the suggestion made on the subject in our author's *Areopagitica*, and abolished the office of Licenser; but the bigotry and despotic temper of Clarendon, Sheldon, and other advisers of Charles II., had caused it to be restored by Act of Parliament in 1662. Its duties were divided among the Judges, some of the Officers of State, and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Poetry came under the supervision of the last, and Sheldon's chaplain, the Rev. Thomas Tomkyns, to whom the task of examining the *Paradise Lost* was deputed, fancied he discerned something very like treason in the simile—

* After the publication of the third edition in 1678, Mrs. Milton gave Simmons a general release, on the receipt of £8, dated April 29, 1681. Simmons transferred his right to Brabazon Aylmer for £25, who sold one half of it August 17, 1683, and the other half, March 24, 1690, to Jacob Tonson, at a great advance of price.—*Todd, from Gent.'s Mag., July, 1822.* We may remark, that Tonson gave Dryden £300 for his *Fables*, which do not contain many more verses than the *Paradise Lost*.

“As when the sun, new-risen,
Looks through the misty horizontal air,” etc.

However his own good sense or the opinions of others prevailed, and the *imprimatur* was granted.

The first edition, of fifteen hundred copies, sold fast enough to entitle the author to his second £5 at the end of two years; and when we consider the state of the times, the ill-odour which the name of the author must have been in with the greater part of the aristocracy, the clergy, and the classes in general who were the chief purchasers of books, and other circumstances, we cannot regard the sale as a bad one. We should recollect the slow sale of the poems of Wordsworth and Southey in our own days. As to the assertion of the poem being above the age in which it appeared, we cannot regard it as correct; the knowledge of the Scriptures, the classics, and the Italian poets, was probably greater at that time than it is at the present day; and this is the knowledge requisite for understanding the *Paradise Lost*. What seems most strange to us is, that the remaining two hundred copies should have supplied the demand for the following five years, and that Simmons should then have ventured on another impression also of fifteen hundred copies.

The only work which Milton gave to the press for some years was his *History of England*, which he brought down to the Norman Invasion, and published in 1670. But he must have been at this time chiefly occupied with his great work, *De Doctrina Christiana*, which was not destined to see the light till after the lapse of a century and a half.

In 1671 he published *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, in a thin octavo volume, handsomely

printed. If Mr. Tomkyns was the examiner, it seems strange that he should have licensed the latter poem, which contains much more perilous passages than the simile in *Paradise Lost*. In 1672 he gave to the press his *Artis Logiceæ plenior Institutio, ad Rami Methodum concinnata*, a work which he probably had had lying by him for years; it came to a second edition in the following year. In 1673 he published a new edition of his Poems, English and Latin, with some additional pieces, and the tractate on Education, in a duodecimo volume far inferior in typography and in correctness to the original edition of 1645. He also published this year a Treatise of True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, etc.

In the year 1674, in which he terminated his earthly career, he gave to the world what appear to have been all that was now remaining in his *scrinia*, his Latin *Epistolæ Familiares*, or letters written to his friends at different dates from 1625 to 1666, and his *Prolusiones Oratoriæ*, which he had delivered during his residence at Cambridge. He seems in fact to have set a high value on everything he wrote, and therefore carefully to have kept copies of all his compositions. A translation of the Declaration for the Election of John Sobieski as King of Poland, appeared this year, said to have been dictated by Milton. The only English manuscript which he seems to have left was a treatise, named *Moscovia, or Account of Muscovy*, compiled from the narratives of the various persons who had visited that then semi-barbarous and little-known country. We have already noticed Milton's fondness for compilation.

He had been for some years afflicted with the gout, and in the month of July, conscious that his end could

not be far distant, when his brother—with whom he had always been on most friendly terms, notwithstanding their differences in politics and other matters—came to see him previous to going down to his residence in Suffolk, he declared before him what he wished to be understood as his last will, leaving all his property to his wife. It seems very strange that, with a brother a lawyer, he should not have made a formal will, but have made such a disposition of his property as was not in accordance with the strict requirements of the law, and, as was the result, liable in consequence to litigation.

We have little information respecting the remaining few months of this illustrious man's existence. A deponent in the suit respecting his will describes him as on a day in the beginning of October, dining alone with his wife in their kitchen, when he, she said, “talked and discoursed sensibly and well, and was very merry, and seemed to be in good health of body.” It is pleasing to view him thus, in the enjoyment of some of the blessings of life, so near the time of his dissolution; for on Sunday, the 8th of the following November, he expired so gently and so free from all pain that the moment of his last respiration was unobserved by those who were in the room. On the 12th his remains were conveyed to the church of St. Giles, Cripplegate, and laid beside those of his father, in the upper part of the church. “The funeral was attended,” says Toland, “by all the author's learned and great friends in London, not without a friendly concourse of the vulgar.” Had he lived another month he would have completed his sixty-sixth year.

In his person Milton was rather under the middle

size,* well-built, and muscular. “ His deportment,” says Wood, “ was affable, and his gait erect and manly, be-speaking courage and undauntedness.” He was skilled in the use of the small-sword ; and, though he certainly would not have engaged in a duel, he had strength, skill, and courage to repel the attack of any adversary.† His hair, which never fell off, was of a light-brown hue, and he wore it parted on his forehead, as is represented in his portraits.‡ His eyes were grey, and, as the cause of his blindness was internal, they suffered no change of appearance from it. His face was oval, and his complexion was so fine in his youth that at Cambridge he was, as we are told by Aubrey, called the Lady of his College ;§ even in his later days his cheeks retained a ruddy tinge. He had a fine ear for music, and was well skilled in that delightful science ; he used to perform on the organ and bass-viol. His voice was sweet and musical,|| and we may presume that his singing showed both taste and science.

Richardson gives the following description of Milton

* “ He was scarce so tall as I am [Qu. *quot* feet I am high? *Resp.* of middle stature].”—*Aubrey*.

† Def. Sec.

‡ See Note G. at the end of this Part.

§ We rather think this is a mistake of Aubrey’s, founded on the following passage in one of the Prolusions, where a different reason seems to be assigned :—

“ A quibusdam nuper audivi *Domina*. At cur videor illis parum masculus? Ecquis Prisciani pudor? Itane propria quæ maribus foemineo generi tribuunt insulsi grammaticastri? Scilicet quia scyphos capacissimos nunquam valui paneratice haurire; aut quia manus tenenda stiva non ocellavit; aut quia nunquam ad meridianum solem supinus jacui septennis bubulus; fortasse demum quod nunquam me virum præstiti eo modo quo illi ganeones.”

|| “ He had a delicate tunable voice,” says Aubrey ; and he adds that “ he pronounced the letter R very hard.” This last habit he acquired probably out of his fondness for the Italian.

in his declining years. “An ancient clergyman of Dorsetshire, Dr. Wright, found John Milton in a small chamber hung with rusty green, sitting in an elbow-chair, and dressed neatly in black; pale, but not cadaverous; his hands and feet gouty and with chalk-stones. . . . He used also to sit in a grey coarse cloth coat, at the door of his house near Bunhill Fields, in warm sunny weather, to enjoy the fresh air; and so, as well as in his room, received the visits of people of distinguished parts as well as quality.”

In his mode of living, Milton, as might be anticipated, was moderate and temperate. At his meals he never took much of wine or any other fermented liquor, and he was not fastidious in his food; yet his taste seems to have been delicate and refined like his other senses, and he had a preference for such viands as were of an agreeable flavour. In his early years he used to sit up late at his studies, and perhaps he continued this practice while his sight was good; but in his latter years he retired every night at nine o’clock, and lay till four in summer, till five in winter, and if not disposed then to rise, he had some one to sit at his bedside and read to him. When he rose he had a chapter of the Hebrew Bible read for him, and then, with of course the intervention of breakfast, studied till twelve.* He then dined, took some exercise for an hour,—generally in a chair, in which he used to swing himself,—and afterwards played on the organ or the bass-viol, and either

* Aubrey says he had a man who read to him and wrote for him. He first read to him when he rose, and then returned at seven o’clock and read and wrote till dinner-time. “The writing was as much as the reading.” We are to recollect that his daughters were not with him for the last four or five years of his life.

sang himself or made his wife sing, who, as he said, had a good voice but no ear. He then resumed his studies till six, from which hour till eight he conversed with those who came to visit him.* He finally took a light supper, smoked a pipe of tobacco, and drank a glass of water, after which he retired to rest.

Thus calmly, thus gently, quietly, and unostentatiously glided away the closing days in the life of a man who possessed a secret consciousness that he had well performed the part assigned him on earth; had well employed the talents committed to him; had achieved a name among the most illustrious of the sons of men, which was to last perhaps coevally with the world itself. All these cheering thoughts and anticipations were illumined and gilded by the light that beamed on his inward sense from the future world, in which he was to enjoy the fulness of bliss. Surely such a man could not have been unhappy, however narrow his circumstances, however undutiful his children, however disappointed his religious and political aspirations. Nor should be omitted in enumerating the blessings bestowed on this illustrious man, his total exemption at all periods of his life from the miseries of a dependence on and solicitation of courts and ministers and the worldly great,†—miseries

* “He was visited by the learned,” says Aubrey, “much more than he did desire.” Among his visitors was John Dryden: see Preface to State of Innocence and Fables. Aubrey tells us that he asked permission to dramatize Paradise Lost in rime, and that Milton replied that he might *tag* his verses if he liked. Milton, his widow said, looked on Dryden as a mere rimester, and no poet.

† We must however say that there is something very gratifying to the feelings in the contemplation of the friendship—for it was not mere patronage—which prevailed between Lord Lonsdale and his family and the late William Wordsworth. It was alike honourable to both parties; the dignity of genius was acknowledged, and rank and wealth appeared in their proper lustre.

described by his great poetic sire, from bitter experience, so truly, so vividly, and so feelingly:—

“ Full little knowest thou, that hast not tried,
What hell it is in suing long to bide ;
To lose good days that might be better spent ;
To waste long nights in pensive discontent ;
To spend today, to be put back tomorrow ;
To feed on hope, to pine with fear and sorrow ;
To have thy Prince's grace, yet want her Peers' ;
To have thy asking, yet wait many years ;
To fret thy soul with crosses and with cares ;
To eat thy heart through comfortless despairs
To fawn, to crouch, to wait, to ride, to run ;
To spend, to give, to want, to be undone.”

Mother Hubbard's Tale, 895 seq.

Like many other poets Milton found the stillness, warmth, and recumbency of bed favourable to composition ; and his wife said that before rising of a morning, he often dictated to her twenty or thirty verses. A favourite position of his when dictating his verses, we are told, was that of sitting with one of his legs oyer an arm of his chair. His wife related that he used to compose chiefly in the winter, which account is confirmed by the following passage in his Life by Phillips :—“ There is a remarkable passage in the composition of *Paradise Lost* which I have a particular occasion to remember ; for, whereas I had the perusal of it from the very beginning, for some years, as I went from time to time to visit him, in a parcel of ten, twenty, or thirty verses at a time, which, being written by whatever hand came next, might possibly want correction as to the orthography and pointing ; having, as the summer came on, not been shown any for a considerable while, and desiring to know the reason thereof, was answered that ‘ his veins never happily flowed but from the autumnal equinox to the vernal, and

that whatever he attempted [at other times] was never to his satisfaction, though he courted his fancy never so much ; so that in all the years he was about this poem, he may be said to have spent but half his time therein.”*

Milton’s conversation is stated to have been of a very agreeable nature. His daughter Deborah said that he was “delightful company, the life of the conversation, and that on account of a flow of subject, and an unaffected cheerfulness and civility.” Richardson, to whom we are indebted for the preservation of this testimony, adds that “he had a gravity in his temper, not melancholy, or not till the latter part of his life, not sour, not morose or ill-natured, but a certain severity of mind ; a mind not condescending to little things.” His temper however was warm, perhaps somewhat overbearing, as some places of his controversial writings may appear to indicate, and we have the testimony of probably an indifferent person that he was looked on as “a harsh and choleric man ;” but all this is perfectly compatible with the highest moral excellence, and with general urbanity and kindness of nature and manner. Thus the meaning of these last words may be that he was one who would not tamely submit to injustice and imposition. Heinsius writing to Gronovius in 1651, says of Milton, “virum esse miti comique ingenio aiunt.” His opinion of his own powers was naturally high, and he speaks of his

* There seems to be some foundation in the poems themselves for this notion. His best Latin poems, such as the *Mansus*, the *Epitaphium Damonis*, etc., must have been composed in the period specified ; so also was the *Ode on the Nativity*, and *Lycidas*, and probably *Paradise Regained*. In fact the only one of his longer poems of which we can assert the contrary is *Comus*. In his Latin elegy *In Adventum Veris* however he would seem to say that it was with the Spring that his poetic powers revived.

“honest haughtiness and self-esteem,” joined however, he adds, with a becoming modesty.

With respect to the worldly circumstances of this great man, little is known with certainty. It is evident that during his travels, and after his return, the allowance made him by his father was liberal. It was adequate, we may see, to the support of himself and his two nephews, for it is not likely that his sister paid him anything for them. He must also have considered himself able to support a family, without keeping school, when he married Miss Powell. He of course inherited the bulk of his father’s property, but of the amount of it we are ignorant; all we know is that it included the interest in his house in Bread-street. His losses were not inconsiderable. A sum of £2000, which he had invested in the Excise Office, was lost at the Restoration, as the Government refused to recognize the obligations of the Commonwealth; according to the account of his granddaughter, he lost another sum of £2000 by placing it in the hands of a money-scrivener; and he also lost at the Restoration a property of £60 a year out of the lands of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, which he very probably had purchased. His house in Bread-street was destroyed by the Great Fire. The whole property which he left behind him, exclusive of his claim on the Powell family for his first wife’s fortune, and of his household goods,* did not exceed £1500, including the produce of his library, a great part of which he is said to have disposed of before his death.

Two charges have been made against the memory of Milton,—the one, that he was unkind and unjust to his children; the other, that he attended no place of worship,

* Toland.

and never appears to have had social prayers in his family. We will consider the former when we come to speak of his daughters ; the latter we will notice in this place.

It is but too prevalent an opinion that religion consists chiefly in a regular attendance at some place of worship, and at the bottom of this persuasion there seems to be an idea, apparently derived from the language of the Old Testament, that God is more in one place than in another, or that devotions offered in such a place are more acceptable than if offered elsewhere. Hence we may see persons who are so deaf as to be unable to hear any part of the service most regular attendants at church. Such however we know could never have been the belief of Milton, and therefore he may have regarded his blindness as a sufficient excuse for not frequenting any place of worship. This and other reasons have been assigned by Toland, Newton, and others ; but the discovery of his work on Christian Doctrine enables us to see more clearly into the grounds of his not joining himself to any religious society. From his opinions as there developed, we may discern that he differed in his theologic views from every sect then in existence. He says, no doubt, quoting the well-known passage Heb. x. 25, that “it is the duty of believers to join themselves, if possible, to a church duly constituted ;” but he did not regard any society of Christians that he knew of as forming “a church duly constituted” in his eyes, and therefore it was not possible for him to join any. He further defines the universal Church as consisting of those who worship God through Christ anywhere, and either *individually* or in conjunction with others ; and he adds, that those who cannot do this last “conveniently or with full satisfaction of conscience,” are not to be sup-

posed not to partake of the blessings bestowed on the Church.

As to his not having social prayer in his family, this we think may be elucidated by the remark he makes respecting our Lord, who, he says, "appears seldom to have prayed in conjunction with his disciples, or even in their presence, but either wholly alone or at some distance from them." This was probably the model which he set before himself, and he may have deemed it sufficient to give his family an example of true and rational devotion. He commenced every day with the reading of the Scriptures, and spent some time in silent and serious meditation thereon, saying thus, as it were, to those around him, "Go and do thou likewise." He did not seek apparently to impress his own peculiar views on his family. He must have been married to his last wife according to the rites of the Church of England, and it is very probable that she frequented some place of worship, as she died a member of the Baptist society. To judge by one of the interrogatories put to the witnesses in the case of his will, and probably suggested by the malicious Mary Milton, his daughters were regular in their attendance at church.*

In what precedes we have endeavoured to arrange and narrate all the circumstances relating to the life, manners, pursuits, and occupations of the ever-illustrious John Milton. Scanty as they may appear to be, they are, in reality, more copious than those which have reached us of any other distinguished man anterior to the 18th century. Thus, what do we *know* of the lives of Dante,

* See Note II. at end of this Part.

of Shakespeare, of Spenser? Almost nothing. Of Torquato Tasso and a few others we know somewhat more, yet still comparatively little. And perhaps—though we are far from asserting it of Milton—it is better for the fame of great writers that their history should be involved in a kind of mythic envelope, and that thus, like superior beings, they should be known to the after-world only by the products of their creative genius. We say this, knowing no human being to be exempt from imperfection, and judging by the effects of some of the copious biographies of modern times.

MILTON'S FAMILY.

ANNE MILTON.

THE eldest child of John Milton of Bread-street of whom we have any account was a daughter named Anne. Of the date of her birth we are not informed,* but as she had a child before her brother John had completed his seventeenth year, she was probably at least two or three years older than he was ; and we may therefore venture to place her birth in the year 1605 or 1606. Her father gave her in marriage, with a handsome fortune,—probably in the year 1624,—to Mr. Edward Phillips, a native of Shrewsbury ; who, having come up young to London, as his son tells us, had obtained in process of time the lucrative office of Secondary in the Crown Office in the Court of Chancery. Of his age at that time we have no information, but he was probably not very young, as he did not survive his marriage many years. Beside the daughter who died soon after her birth, and whose memory has been embalmed by the genius of her youthful uncle, they had two sons, named Edward and John ; the former born in 1630, the latter

* Todd informs us that her birth is not to be found in the register of Allhallows, and assigns as a reason that she may have been born before her father settled in Bread-street. See above, p. 3.

about a year later, of whom we will presently treat more at large ; and it is not improbable that in the interval between 1625 and 1630 they lost another child or two. We are completely in the dark also as to the time of the death of Mr. Phillips ; but in 1639, when our poet returned from his travels, his sister was, and may have been for some time, married to Mr. Agar, a friend of her first husband's, and his successor in the Crown Office. By him she had two daughters,—Mary, who died young, and Anne, who was living in 1694 when her brother Edward was writing the life of his illustrious kinsman. It is from this narrative that we have derived all our information respecting his mother, and here his communications end. Perhaps we might infer from her brother's verses on the death of her child that Mrs. Phillips was an amiable woman.

CHRISTOPHER MILTON.

The only surviving child of John Milton, beside his daughter Anne and his son John, was a son named Christopher, born, as it would appear,* toward the end of November, in the year 1615, and therefore seven years younger than his brother John. His father, who, as we have seen, had destined his elder son for the Church, put his younger to the legal profession, and he became a barrister-at-law. He was, like most of his profession, a Royalist in principle. He established himself in the town of Reading in Berkshire ; and, probably soon after the departure of his brother John for

* Todd quotes from the register of Allhallows :—“The third daye of December, 1615, was baptizid CHRISTOPHER, the sonne of John Mylton of this piske, scrivenor.”

the Continent, his father, averse to loneliness, went to reside with him. When Reading surrendered in 1643, to the troops of the Parliament, the old gentleman went up to the house of his son John in London, where he spent his few remaining years. Christopher, who it appears was by no means inactive in the Royal cause, went then to Exeter, and was in it when it surrendered, on the 13th of April, 1646, on which occasion he was obliged to compound for his delinquency. The following is his composition-paper, preserved in the State Paper Office :—

“ Christopher Milton, of Reddinge, in the County of Berks, Esq., Councillor at Lawe. His Delinquency, that he was a Commissioner for the Kinge, under the Great Seale of Oxford, for sequestring the Parliament’s friends of three Counties ; and afterwards went to Exeester and lived there, and was there at the tyme of the surrender, and is to have the benefitt of those Articles, as by the Deputy Governor’s Certificate of that place of the 16th of May, 1646, doth appeare. He hath taken the Nationall Covenant before William Barton, Minister of John Zacharies, the 20th of April, 1646, and the Negative Oath heere the 8th August, 1646. He compounds upon a Particular delivered in under his hand, by which he doth submit to such fine, etc., and by which it doth appere :

“ That he is seized in fee, to him and his heirs in possession, of and in a certain Messuage or Tenement seittuate in St. Martin’s Parish, Ludgate, called the Signe of the Crosse Keys, and was of the Yeerly Value, before theis troubles, £40. Personal estate he hath none.

“ *Signed* { WILL. THOMSON.
 } Fine at 3d. is £200.

“ *Signed* { 25th August, 1646,
 } JEROM ALEXANDER.”

We may see from this that the conscience of Christopher Milton was not a very rigid one. He took the Covenant without much apparent hesitation ; yet it did

not secure him from what seems to be rather a heavy fine,—five years' income at what had been the value of his property before the war, and which must have been then somewhat reduced. Phillips tells us that his “composition was made by the help of his brother's interest;” but this appears to us to be an unwarranted assertion. Phillips was rather prone to exalting the political consideration of his more distinguished uncle, and we are not aware that Milton had any interest in 1646, and no extraordinary favour seems to have been shown to the delinquent. As Exeter was surrendered, not taken, it was of course agreed, that the Royalists of property in it should be allowed to compound for their estates.

A question arises,—how did Christopher Milton get this property in Ludgate? The simplest solution seems to be, that his father purchased it and gave it to him, either when commencing his law studies, or at the time of his marriage, intending to leave the bulk of his property to his eldest son. That Christopher was early in good circumstances is clear; for, as we have seen, in 1645, when he was only in his thirtieth year, he is said to have been married many years before.*

The last mention of his ease in the public documents of those times is, that “it was reported, 21 December, 1649, and that [as already noticed] the fine was £200.” In exacting so large a sum, it is very likely that a view was had to his professional gains.

We hear nothing further of Christopher Milton for the next five-and-twenty years. In the summer of 1674, as we have seen, he called to take leave of his brother, previous to his going down to the country; and in his

* See above, p. 41.

account of the interview he informs us, that he was then “a practicer of the law, and a Bencher of the Inner Temple,” and that he used to spend his vacations at Ipswich,—where it would seem that he had some property,—and that further, he was in the habit of going to take leave of his brother before he left town. We may thence infer, that the brothers continued to live upon friendly, if not very intimate, terms.

In the charter granted to the town of Ipswich by Charles II., Christopher Milton was nominated as deputy-recorder of that town. In the next reign he rose still higher; he was knighted, and made a judge. His nephew’s account,—written, we may observe, after his death,—is that “he was a person of a modest and quiet temper, preferring justice before all worldly pleasure and grandeur; but that in the beginning of the reign of James II., for his known integrity and ability in law, he was by some persons of quality recommended to the King; and at a call of the Sergeants received the coif, and the same day was sworn one of the Barons of the Exchequer, and soon after made one of the Judges of the Common Pleas. But his years and indisposition not well brooking the fatigue of public employment, he continued not long in either of these stations; but, having his *Quietus est*, retired to a country life, his study, and devotion.” Phillips however omits a very essential portion of the causes of his venerable relative’s elevation,—namely, his compliance with the King’s religion; for his conscience, with its usual elasticity, allowed him, when beyond his seventieth year, to adopt the Roman Catholic creed, in the hope of legal preferment. Toland’s account of him is less favourable, and apparently more just. He tells us, “that he was of a very superstitious

nature, and a man of no parts or ability; and that James, wanting a set of judges that could declare his will to be superior to our legal constitution, appointed him one of the Barons of Exchequer." Very possibly it was the Revolution that gave the old judge his *Quietus est*. He is said* to have inhabited, in Ipswich, a house which had formerly belonged to the ancient family of Wingfield, a part of which he fitted up for the celebration of the Roman Catholic worship. He afterwards moved to the village of Rushmore, about two miles from that town; where he occupied a house, now called the White House, and in which he died, in the early part of the year 1692, in the seventy-seventh year of his age. He was buried in the Church of St. Nicholas, in Ipswich.†

Sir Christopher Milton had two daughters, named Mary and Catherine; and a son, named Thomas, who was bred to the law, and succeeded his uncle Agar, in his situation in the Crown Office. Milton's granddaughter, Mrs. Foster, informed Dr. Birch that her great-uncle Christopher had, beside those two daughters, a third, who was married to a Mr. Pendlebury, a clergyman; that the others never married, and that they lived for many years at Highgate, and that one of them died at her (Mrs. Foster's) house, at Lower Holloway, at the age of about ninety years.‡

* Todd, from the information of the Rev. James Ford.

† "1692, March 22. Sir Christopher Melton, of Rushmore, was buried in the church of this parish." Registry of St. Nicholas, *ap.* Todd, who also informs us that there is an entry in it of C. Milton's daughter Mary, March 29, 1656.

‡ See Hunter, Milton, p. 34.

ANNE, MARY, AND DEBORAH MILTON.

We are now to consider Milton in his relation to his daughters more fully than we have done hitherto. Of these, we see, he had three, all by his first wife. Anne, called probably after his sister, who may have been her godmother, had, we are told, a fair face, but she had some kind of impediment in her speech,—for which reason her father excused her from reading to him like her sisters,—and she was in her person somewhat deformed, or, as it was termed, “lame and helpless.” She married notwithstanding, after her father’s death, when she was probably about nine and twenty or thirty years of age. Her husband is called a master builder, probably answering to the architect of the present day, so that there may have been nothing derogatory in the alliance. Like her mother and stepmother she died in childbed, of her first child.

Of Mary, the second daughter, we know much less. She was named after her mother, “whom,” Aubrey says, “she resembled more than her sisters did;” perhaps we might extend the resemblance to her mind and disposition. She seems to have been, by far, the most unamiable of the three. We have seen a very unfeeling expression respecting her father attributed to her, and it was her probably that he had chiefly in view when he spoke of the unkindness of his children. She died unmarried, but in what year we are not informed.

Deborah was the youngest and the best of Milton’s children. She resembled her father in face, and perhaps in temper and disposition. It was natural therefore that she should have been his favourite, as we are told she was. As she was only twelve years old at the time

of her father's last marriage, it does not seem reasonable to include her among those whom he charged with unkindness, though she may at times have acted under the influence of her sisters. Aubrey tells us that she was her father's amanuensis, and that he taught her Latin and to read Greek. Some time before her father's death, —in consequence, according to her daughter's account, of the ill-treatment she received from her stepmother, —she went over to Ireland, to Dublin we may presume, with a lady named Merian, probably a friend of Lady Ranelagh's, who undertook to provide for her. She might then have been from eighteen to twenty years of age. With this lady she remained till her marriage, which may have taken place before her father's decease, as, though in the legal proceedings which followed it she is termed Deborah Milton, the receipt for the money paid her by her stepmother is signed by herself and her husband. Aubrey tells us expressly, that she married in Dublin “one Mr. Clarke, a mercer, sells silk;” and her daughter adds, “that she (and her husband) came over again to England during the troubles in Ireland under King James II.,”—that is, probably in the year 1687; so that she had, it would appear, been at least fifteen years out of England. We may presume that her husband commenced business either as a mercer or as a master silk-weaver in Spitalfields, and that hence it is that the biographers, with an utter disregard of the statements of Aubrey and her daughter, follow Warton in saying briefly that “she married Abraham Clarke, a weaver, in Spitalfields.” She had a large family of seven sons and three daughters. She died in August, 1727, in the seventy-sixth year of her age. Richardson and Professor Ward, of Gresham College,

were both well acquainted with her, and learned from her many particulars respecting her father. She is said to have been a woman of a very cultivated understanding, and not inelegant of manners. The excellent and amiable Joseph Addison, out of veneration to her illustrious sire, sought her out; and finding her in narrow circumstances, made her a handsome present. We are told that when she came, at his desire, to wait upon him, he was so struck with her resemblance to the pictures of Milton, that he said to her, "Madam, you need no other voucher; your face is a sufficient testimonial whose daughter you are." On his representation, the Princess of Wales (afterwards Queen Caroline) sent her a purse of fifty guineas. We are also told that in 1725,—that is, two years before her death,—Vertue the engraver took Faithorn's crayon-drawing of Milton, with some other engravings and paintings reputed to be likenesses of him, to her house. He had them brought in, as if by chance, while he was conversing with her; and at the sight of Faithorn's drawing, without taking any notice of the others, she suddenly cried out in great surprise, "O Lord! that is the picture of my father! How came you by it?" and shaking down the hair of her forehead, added, "just so my father wore his hair."

Of all the children of Deborah Clarke, only two are known anything of,—a son named Caleb, and her youngest daughter Elizabeth. The former went to Madras, in the service of the East India Company; and according to the information given to Mr. Todd by Sir James Mackintosh, he acted as parish-clerk in that factory, where he probably died. Elizabeth married Thomas Foster, a weaver (whether a master or not, we are not informed) in Spitalfields, by whom she had seven children, who all

died before their parents. Her husband probably failed in business, if a master, or became incapable of work, if a mere operative, for she had to keep a small grocer's or chandler's shop for their support; first in Lower Holloway, and then in Cock-lane, near Shoreditch Church. Dr. Birch knew her, and learned from her some particulars respecting her grandfather and his family. He describes her as a plain, sensible woman. In consequence of his exertions, ably seconded by Johnson, Comus was acted for her benefit, on the 5th of April, 1750; for which Johnson wrote a prologue that does him honour. He tells us that "she had so little acquaintance with diversion or gaiety, that she did not know what was intended when a benefit was offered her." He further informs us, that "the profits of the performance were only £130, although Dr. Newton contributed largely, and £20 were given by Tonson, a man who is to be praised as often as he is named." He adds, that £100 were placed in the funds; the rest augmented their little stock, with which they removed to Islington.* Mrs. Foster did not long survive this paltry addition to her means of subsistence. A paragraph to the following effect has been preserved from one of the newspapers of the time:†—"On Thursday last, May 9, 1754, died at Islington, in the sixty-sixth year of her age, after a long and painful illness, which she sustained with Christian fortitude, Mrs. Elizabeth Foster, granddaughter of Mil-

* Todd however states, on the authority of Isaac Reed, that the receipts of the house were only £147. 14s. 6d., from which £80 were deducted for the expenses, leaving not quite £70 for Mrs. Foster. The donations of Newton and Tonson are probably not to be included in this sum, as they seem to be by Todd; who also gives Warton, and not Johnson, as the authority for the statement in the text.

† In *Memoirs of T. Hollis*, i. 114, quoted by Mitford.

ton." With her ended the direct line of John Milton. It seems as if it were a law of nature, that those on whom Heaven has bestowed its noblest gifts, and whose mental productions are destined to continue during ages of ages to yield profit and delight to mankind, should not be permitted to keep up their name in the same manner as the ordinary race of mortals. They either live and die unmarried, like Virgil, Tasso, Camões, Pope ; or, if married, their posterity ends in, at furthest, the third generation, like Shakespeare, Spenser, Milton. But their name remains flourishing in everlasting verdure, gloriously distinguished from those of the high-titled,

“whose ancient but ignoble blood
May have crept through scoundrels ever since the Flood.”

This we regard as the most fitting place to treat of Milton's behaviour toward his daughters, which is generally regarded as the darkest spot in his history.

Mrs. Foster gave Dr. Birch to understand that her grandfather treated his daughters with much harshness, and was so indifferent about their mental culture that he would not even let them learn to write. Phillips tells us that he made the two youngest—for the eldest was excused on account of her imperfect articulation—read to him the Hebrew (and he thinks the Syriac), Greek, Latin, Italian, Spanish, and French languages, though they only understood their mother-tongue. This naturally was extremely irksome, and they complained bitterly of it ; and “at length,” he adds, “they were all (even the eldest also) sent out to learn some curious and ingenious sorts of manufacture, that are proper for women to learn, particularly embroidery in gold and silver.” The same account of their reading to him was also given by Deborah

to Dr. Ward, according to whom she said that they read *eight* languages to their father ; yet what use he could have had for any but the Hebrew, Greek, Latin, Italian, and perhaps the French, we are unable to discern. She also, he said, could repeat the beginning of the *Ilias*, and of Ovid's *Metamorphoses* ; yet surely Milton must have had these by heart himself. We may however suppose, that, when meditating on *Paradise Lost*, he may have had Ovid's account of creation frequently read for him, and so these lines may have fixed themselves in his daughter's memory,--more especially as there is some reason for believing that she may have understood them ; but we cannot see how she could have gotten the first lines of the *Ilias* by heart, for she certainly was ignorant of Greek. The learning to read Hebrew too, must have been a most irksome task. Finally, it is said, that in his uxoriousness he gave the whole of his property to his wife, leaving his children unprovided for. This, we believe, is the whole of the case against Milton.

Let us now see what can be said on the other side. Mrs. Foster said that her grandfather would not let his daughters even learn to write. Now they must have known how to write, for their receipts are extant for the money paid them by their stepmother ; and Aubrey positively asserts that Deborah Milton was her father's amanuensis. He adds, that her father "taught her Latin and to read Greek," by which he must have meant that she could read Latin with understanding, while she only knew the Greek characters. Deborah was probably one of the copyists of the pieces in the Cambridge MS., most of whom were females. Her own account to Dr. Ward was, that she and her sisters were "not sent to school, but taught at home by a mistress kept for that

purpose," which might seem to indicate that they had a resident governess, which would open to us a new feature in Milton's domestic economy in the interval between his second and his last marriage, and also explains the declaration ascribed to him, that he "had spent the greater part of his estate in providing for them;" in which he of course included the cost of having them taught embroidery, and the separate establishment which he seems to have maintained for them for the last four or five years of his life.

It thus appears that Milton did not neglect the education of his children. They were probably taught as much, or rather more, as any young women in their rank of life at that time.

The only remaining charge is, that he left his property away from them. The superior claims of his wife we will presently notice; here it is to be observed, that the two eldest had a genteel trade by which they could support themselves, and that Mrs. Merian had promised to provide for Deborah,—a promise which she seems to have performed. Their father left them beside his claim for their mother's fortune of £1000, which had never been paid him, and which their uncle Milton declared that he regarded as good money, as it was "in the hands of persons of ability, able to pay the same, being their grandmother and uncle; and he had seen the grandfather's will, wherein it is particularly directed to be paid unto them by his executors." It would therefore seem that Mr. Powell, when making his will, left, probably with Milton's assent, his daughter's fortune to the issue of her marriage; for only one child had been born when he died. If then they were left portionless, it was owing to the dishonesty of their grandmother and uncle, and not to the unkindness of their father.

ELIZABETH MILTON.

Milton's third and last wife was, as we have seen, Elizabeth, daughter of Mr. Randle Minshull, of Wistaston, near Nantwich, in the county of Chester,* to whom he was introduced by his friend Dr. Paget, who was related to the Minshull family. As it appears from the parish register of Wistaston that she was baptized on the 30th of December, 1638, she was probably born some time in that month, being about thirty years younger than her husband; he being in his fifty-sixth, she in her twenty-sixth year, when they were married in 1664. She was probably a handsome young woman at the time. Newton says that he was told by a gentleman who knew her in Cheshire, that her hair was of a golden hue,—a colour usually associated with some degree of personal beauty. He thinks that Milton had her in his mind's eye when drawing the portrait of his Eve; but that part of the poem must have been written some time before his marriage. Aubrey, who knew her personally, says she was “a genteel person, *of* a peaceful and agreeable humour.” She appears to have had a high degree of respect and veneration for her husband, and to have made him an excellent wife, studying his comfort in every way. To reward her for her care, he left her what fortune he died possessed of. We have seen that he regarded his children as having no claim on him, being already provided for. But as his will was merely nuncupative and irregular, they disputed it after his death, and she was obliged to make a compromise with them,

* See the pedigree of the Mynshull family given by Mr. Marsh, of Warrington, from the Cheshire Visitation of 1663–4, and the Lancashire Visitation of 1664–5, in Notes and Queries, vol. ix. p. 38.

giving them £100 apiece.* She retired to her native county, where she survived her husband fifty-three years. She died in 1727, the same year as her stepdaughter Deborah, in the eighty-ninth year of her age. She was a member of the Baptist society.

Hard things have been said of Mrs. Milton, but we doubt if with much foundation of truth. Mrs. Foster said that it was her ill-treatment made her mother go to Ireland with Mrs. Merian ; but surely the prospect of residing in the house of a lady, of perhaps some fashion, with a promise of being provided for, may have been inducement enough for her taking this step, without the additional *stimulus* of ill-usage at home. Besides, it is very probable that Deborah was at that time living with her sisters, and not at her father's. Again, Phillips says of his uncle's wife that "she persecuted his children in his lifetime, and cheated them at his death." By this last assertion is meant of course that she induced him to make a will in her favour ; but he knows little of Milton who suspects him of uxoriousness at any period of his life, and the vigour of his faculties remained unimpaired to the last. In this matter he acted, as we have seen, on the principles of justice, leaving his property to the person whom he deemed to have the highest claim on him. We are also to recollect that Phillips did not write till twenty years after his uncle's death, and that therefore his recollection of circumstances may not have been very accurate ; and he may have adopted the prejudices of his cousins, and visited the iniquity of their mother's family on their father's widow. The last charge made against Mrs. Milton is by Richardson, who says that she used frequently to tease him for his carelessness and ignorance

* See Note I. at end of this Part.

about money-matters, and adds that she was a *termagant*. This however is totally opposed to the account of her given by Aubrey, who knew her; and we must confess we prefer his testimony to that of the lively painter, who then assures us that an offer was made of re-appointing her husband to the office of Latin Secretary, and that she urged him vehemently to accept of it, whereupon he made reply: "Thou art in the right. You, as other women, would ride in your coach; for me, my aim is to live and die an honest man." We do not regard this anecdote either as very probable, though office was offered to Thurloe, Cromwell's secretary.

EDWARD AND JOHN PHILLIPS.

The last of Milton's family of whom it appears necessary to give an account are his two nephews, the sons of his sister Anne, Edward and John Phillips. As the former, who became his biographer, tells us that he himself was ten, and his brother nine years old when they went to live with their uncle in 1641, we may presume that the former was born in 1631, and the latter in 1632.

In March, 1648, Edward Phillips went to Magdalen College in Oxford. It is not certain whether he remained with his uncle up to that period or not; but as he says himself that he was five or six years with him, he may have left him a couple of years before that time. He remained at Oxford till 1651, and then left it without having graduated. We hear nothing further of him till 1656, when he published an edition of the Poems of Drummond of Hawthornden, and a translation of Montalvo's pastoral romance, *The Shepherd of Filidas*, from the Spanish. Two years later we find him appearing as the author of a work which one might not have expected

from the pupil of Milton. It was named *Mysteries of Love and Eloquence, etc., the Art of Wooing* as managed in the Spring Garden, Hyde Park, the New Exchange, etc. In 1659 he published a dictionary, named *A New World of Words*. He was also about this time employed to edit and continue Sir Richard Baker's *Chronicle*, a task which he continued to discharge for every successive reprint for many years. We may here observe, that both he and his brother had adopted political principles the very opposite of those held by their uncle, and had joined the ranks of the Royalists. How often in life is this phenomenon presented to us, of men quitting the religious or political principles in which they have been sedulously nurtured! The usual cause is, the reins of discipline having been tightened too much; and perhaps this may have been the case in this instance also.

After the Restoration, in the period from 1660 to 1666, we find Edward Phillips employed as tutor to the son of the celebrated John Evelyn; and as his pupil distinguished himself at the University, we may presume that he had been well instructed. Phillips then accepted a similar employment in the family of the Earl of Pembroke; and when he had finished there, he entered that of the Popish Earl of Arlington, as reader to himself and tutor to his daughter and heiress, the Lady Isabella, and her cousin Henry Bennet.* During this period, as we

* "Oct. 24, 1663. Mr. Edward Phillips came to be my son's preceptor. This gentleman was nephew to Milton, who wrote against *Salmasius' Defensio*, but was not at all infected with his principles, though brought up by him."

"Feb. 24, 1665. Mr. Phillips, preceptor to my son, went to be with the Earl of Pembroke's son, my Lord Herbert."

"Sept. 18, 1677. I proposed Mr. Phillips, nephew of Milton, to the service of my Lord Chamberlain [Arlington] who wanted a scholar to read to and entertain him sometimes."—*Evelyn's Diary*.

have seen, he used to visit his uncle regularly, and give him any aid he could in revising the manuscripts of his works. In 1675 he published his *Theatrum Poetarum*, or account of the principal ancient and modern, but chiefly English, poets. He did various literary jobs for the booksellers, such as translations, etc.; and from a passage in his *Life of Milton*, we might infer that he kept a school in his later years. In 1694 he published a translation of his uncle's Latin Letters, to which he prefixed the well-known and precious piece of biography so often quoted in these pages. He probably died not long after, for he was no longer living when Toland wrote his *Life of Milton* in 1698. The character of Edward Phillips appears to have been that of an amiable, honourable, learned, and industrious man of letters.

John Phillips was superior to his brother in talent, but far below him in moral worth. We have seen that in 1651 he was deputed by his uncle to answer one of the assailants of his *Defence*. He was probably at that time acting as clerk to him in his public office. He could hardly have been so when, in 1655, he published his witty but licentious poem, the *Satire against Hypocrites*; in which he describes a Sunday, a Christening, and a Wednesday-Fast as they were held by the rigidly righteous of those days. This poem went through several editions. In 1659 he published *Montelion*, or the *Prophetical Almanac*, in ridicule of the noted Lilly the Astrologer, who was then in high repute; and next year, a mock romance on the Royalist side, and ridiculing the Commonwealth's-men. It was named *Don Lambert*, from General Lambert; and Sir Harry Vane and others figure in it. In thus attacking men under persecution he showed alike his want of taste and want of feeling.

In 1672 he published a travestie of the fifth and sixth books of the *Aeneis*; he also published a licentious translation of *Don Quixote*,* and various other things. After the Revolution he became the conductor of a monthly journal, called the *Monthly Mercury*. He is supposed to have lived till the year 1705, and to have continued writing to the last. Wood,—but his *dicta* are not to be received implicitly,—says of him: “A man of very loose principles, atheistical, forsakes his wife and children, makes no provision for them.”

* “The translation of *Don Quixote*, published in 1682, may also be specified as incredibly vulgar, and without the least perception of the tone which the original author has preserved.” (Hallam, Lit. of Europe, iii. 553.) Mr. Hallam was apparently ignorant of the name of the translator. He is speaking of the *slang* which then prevailed in English literature.



MILTON'S FRIENDS.

THOMAS YOUNG.

THOMAS YOUNG, as we have seen, was engaged by the elder Milton to instruct his son in private. Aubrey's account of him is, that he was "a Puritan in Essex, who cut his hair short." Warton tells us, from a manuscript history of Jesus College, Cambridge, of which Young was Master, that he was a native of Scotland, apparently of Perthshire. In 1623 he was invited by the English merchants settled at Hamburg to assume the office of their spiritual pastor. He accepted the invitation; and during his residence there his former pupil wrote him a Latin epistle, dated London, March 26, 1625, and his fourth Latin Elegy in 1627. Young, as there is reason to suppose, returned to England in this or early in the following year, and settled at Stowmarket, in the county of Suffolk; whence he appears to have written to Milton, inviting him to go and spend some time with him. In his answer, dated Cambridge, July 21, 1628, Milton promises to visit him in the following Spring, in order to enjoy the charms of the season and of his conversation, away from the din and bustle of the town. He speaks of his Suffolk *Stoa* as vying with that of Zeno or Cicero's Tusculum, where, like another Serranus or Curius, in his

moderate circumstances he gently ruled with a royal mind in his little farm. Whether this language is figurative, or that Young had in reality become the occupier of a small farm, is not certain. The latter seems the more probable supposition; and probably to his charge of a Puritan congregation he united—according to the plan afterwards proposed by his pupil—the occupation of an agriculturist.

Young was one of those whose initials went to the formation of the name *Smectymnuus*. He was also a member of the Assembly of Divines. In 1644 he was made Master of Jesus College, Cambridge, by the Parliament. On his refusing to take the Engagement, he was ejected in 1662; and he retired to his former residence at Stowmarket, where he died and was buried, having, as Warton says, held the vicarage of that place for thirty years.

Beside his share in *Smectymnuus*, Warton supposes Young to have published in 1639 a learned work in Latin, on the observation of Sunday, and entitled *Dies Dominica*. He also preached a sermon, entitled *Hope's Incouragement*, before the House of Commons, on a Fast-day, February 20, 1644-5, which was printed by order of the House. In the Dedication he subscribes himself, “Thomas Young, Sancti Evangelii in comitatu Suffolciensi Minister.” Yet, if Warton be correct in his statement, he was at that time Master of Jesus College; for he says that he was admitted to his office there by the Earl of Manchester in person, April 12, 1644. Warton also tells us, from Neale’s History of the Puritans, that at the time of his appointment he held a London preachership in Duke’s Place.

In his Life by Clarke the Calvinist it is stated of

Young that he was “a man of great learning, of much prudence and piety, and of great ability and fidelity in the work of the ministry.”

ALEXANDER GILL.

When Milton was at St. Paul’s School it was kept by Alexander Gill, a man of considerable learning, who published in 1621 a work entitled *Logonomia*, the object of which was that most futile of all objects, to fix and reform the English language; and in 1635, another, called the *Sacred Philosophie of the Holy Scripture*. His son of the same name, the subject of the present notice, was at that time one of the assistants in the school; and being a lover of learning and an admirer of genius, he was naturally attracted by the future author of *Paradise Lost*, and intimacy and friendship was the result.

Alexander Gill the younger was probably born in 1597, for he was fifteen when he was admitted a Commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1612. He had two brothers, named George and Nathaniel, who were also of that College, and on the foundation. Alexander presented the library of his College with the old folio edition of Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*, Drayton’s *Polyolbion* by Selden, and Bourdelotius’ *Lucian*, in all of which were poetic mottoes from the classics in his own handwriting. It would seem that when he had graduated he became assistant to his father, on whose death, in 1635,* he was appointed Master. He was at that time a Doctor of Divinity, having taken that degree at

* It must have been he therefore, and not his father, who was Milton’s neighbour in Aldersgate-street. See above, p. 24.

Oxford in 1629. His rule at St. Paul's lasted, we are told, only five years ; for he was removed on account of his excessive severity. As he is said also to have been an assistant in the school of the celebrated Thomas Far-naby, who left London in 1636, we must suppose that he had not been continuously attached to St. Paul's. His death occurred in 1642, in his forty-fifth or forty-sixth year.

Gill was distinguished as a writer of Latin poetry. Wood says "he was accounted one of the best Latin poets in the nation." But there is higher testimony than Wood's. Three of Milton's Latin epistles are addressed to Gill; and in the first of them, dated from Cambridge, May 20, 1628, acknowledging the receipt of a Latin poem of his on the capture of some town by Henry of Nassau, he terms his verses "*carmina sane grandia, et majestatem vere poeticam Virgilianumque ubique ingenium redolentia,*" to which he adds other highly laudatory expressions. In his third letter to him, written at Horton, December 4, 1634, he returns him his thanks for a copy of Hendecasyllabics, more precious, he says, than gold ; and, with great modesty, sends him in return his Greek version of the 114th Psalm, which, as the strain of an inspired writer, he adds, exceeds his poem as much in the subject, as he excels the translator in poetic skill. Gill had published a selection of his Latin poetry in 1632, in a small duodecimo volume, under the title of *Poetici Conatus*.

Charles Diodati was the schoolfellow and most intimate friend of Milton. He was son to Dr. Theodore

Diodati, an eminent physician, a native of Geneva, of an Italian family settled in that city, who came young to England, where he married a lady of good fortune and family. He was physician to Prince Henry and the Princess Elizabeth, in the reign of James I. His son Charles appears to have been born in 1607, the year before Milton. He was educated at St. Paul's School, whence he was sent to Trinity College, Oxford, where he was entered as a Gentleman Commoner, February 7, 1621-2. He remained there till 1628, when he left it, after having taken his Master's degree. He seems to have spent a part of his time in Cheshire, where probably his mother's family resided. We also find that he had a younger brother; and it would appear that after his father's death, he had, in 1637, some difficulty in arranging matters with his stepmother. He died in the Spring of the following year, while his friend Milton was at Florence. From some passages in one of Milton's letters to him, it would appear that he had adopted his father's profession.

Diodati, as may be inferred from Milton's affection for him, was a man of learning and talent; but there are none of his literary productions remaining, except a copy of Alcaies, in an Oxford collection, on the death of Camden, called *Camdeni Insignia*, printed in 1624, and consequently written when he was sixteen; and two Greek epistles to Milton, without dates, formerly in the possession of Toland, and now in the British Museum.* In the first of these,—evidently written when they were both in London, probably in vacation time at the Universities,—he complains of the badness of the weather, which had prevented some proposed walk of theirs, into

* Mr. Mitford has printed them at the end of his Life of Milton.

the country it would seem, in which they were to amuse themselves with philosophic and literary discussions. He exhorts him to keep up his spirits and not change his mind, as the fine weather must soon re-appear. In the second, apparently written from Cheshire, he speaks with delight of the comforts he enjoyed where he was, and of the charms of the country at that season,—the month of May, it would seem,—with the single drawback, that he had no like-minded friend with whom he could communicate his ideas. He gently reproaches his friend with his disregard of the charms of nature, and his poring, without remission, day and night, over books; and exhorts him to live, laugh, and enjoy his youth, relaxing after the example of those old sages. “As for myself,” he adds, “in all other things your inferior, in this of knowing how to moderate labour, I both think myself to be and am your superior.” Milton addressed to Diodati two of his Latin Elegies; the first, when he was at home, in London, under sentence of rustication from the University, and when Diodati was in Cheshire, but it contains no date, or anything that would enable us to assign its date; and the sixth, written in December, 1629, in answer to a copy of verses sent him by Diodati from the country,—that is of course from Cheshire,—in which he had pleaded in excuse for their inferiority to his usual efforts, the festivities he was partaking of with his friends. Milton also wrote to him two Latin epistles, in September, 1637. Diodati was probably at that time also in Cheshire, for his correspondent terms those he was residing among, Hyperboreans. In the second of these he gives him an account of his aspirations and his studies, and asks him to lend him a historian of Venice. It might appear, from the conclusion of this

epistle, that Diodati had settled in Cheshire. There is also reason to suppose that Milton had already introduced in his Comus the praises of his medical friend, under the character of the “certain shepherd lad, of small regard to see to, but well skilled in every virtuous herb,” etc. On his return from Italy, Milton, in his beautiful Epitaphium Damonis, celebrated the virtues of his friend, and bewailed his own deserted condition, now that he was for ever deprived of his society.

HENRY LAWES.

Henry Lawes was the son of Thomas Lawes, a vicar-choral of Salisbury Cathedral, and it is probable that he was one of the choir-boys. At the charges of Edward, Earl of Hertford, he and his brother William were instructed in music by John Cooper, who, having been in Italy, had Italianized his name to Coperario. In January, 1625, Lawes was appointed, probably through his patron’s interest, Pistoler* of the Royal Chapel; and in the November following, one of the Gentlemen of the Choir belonging to it, and, soon after, Clerk of the Cheque and one of the Court musicians. Lawes, who was a poet and vocalist, as well as a musician, was on terms of intimacy with the best poets of his time, whose verses he set to music, and with the more cultivated and intellectual of the nobility; the children of some of whom, such as the Earl of Bridgewater, he seems to have instructed. During the time of the Civil War and Commonwealth, he supported himself by teaching young ladies to sing and play on the lute. His chief patronesses, as Wood informs us, were Lady Carbury, and

* This is said to mean the person who read the Epistle.

Lady Herbert of Cherbury, the daughter of the Earl of Bridgewater. He was in general greatly respected for his virtues, and his polite and engaging manners. At the Restoration, he was re-established in his former places at Court, and he composed the Coronation Anthem. He died in 1662, and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

Lawes was the favourite composer of his day. He set to music all the songs in the mask of *Cœlum Britannicum* of that sweet poet Thomas Carew, and all the lyrics of Waller; he also composed all the airs and songs in the plays and poems of William Cartwright, and of the Christmas Odes in Herrick's *Hesperides*. He further composed tunes for Sandys' Paraphrase of the Psalms, published in 1638. He and his brother William also composed a volume of Psalms, which was not published, it is said, till 1648; though Milton's sonnet, prefixed to it, and addressed "To Mr. H. Lawes, on the *publishing* of his Airs," is dated February 9, 1645-6. Lawes published in 1653, *Airs and Dialogues for One, Two, and Three Voices, etc.*, dedicated to those two illustrious ladies, his constant patronesses. After his death, in 1669, appeared a *Second Part* of these *Airs and Dialogues*.

Lawes was said to have been the introducer of the Italian style of music into England. His great merit as a composer would seem to have lain in his just adaptation of the music to the sense of the words; making it, as Milton expresses it, "span words with just note and accent." Dr. Burney however, in his *History of Music*, speaks slightly of Lawes as a composer.

These were the only friends of the early years of Mil-

ton of whom we have any account. Doubtless he had others, but their names are unknown, *carent quia vate saevo*. Of this we may be sure, that they were of his own rank in life ; for, as we have already observed, and shall observe again, he sought not the society of the great in the estimation of the vulgar.

After his return from Italy, and when he was settled in a house of his own, and was known as an able controversial writer, his acquaintance was sought, and he obtained a new circle of friends. Of these the best known are the following.

SAMUEL HARTLIB.

Samuel Hartlib, to whom Milton dedicated his tractate on Education, was the son of an eminent Polish merchant who had settled at Elbing, in Prussia. His mother was an Englishwoman ; and he came and settled in London, as Warton thinks, about the year 1640. While there, he occupied himself in editing tracts on agriculture, written by various persons ; and his merits were deemed to be such that a handsome pension was settled on him by the Parliament. His own words, in one of his prefaces, are : “ As long as I have lived in England, by wonderful providences I have spent yearly out of my own betwixt £300 and £400 a year sterling ; and when I was brought to public allowances, I have had from the Parliaments and Councils of State a pension of £300 sterling a year, which as freely I have spent for their service and the good of many.” He also says that he had “ erected a little academy for the education of the gentry of this nation, to advance piety, learning, morality, and other exercises of industry, not usual in common schools.” Hence we

see why it was to him that Milton addressed his treatise on education.

At the Restoration, as few of the engagements of the preceding Government were kept, Hartlib's pension remained of course unpaid. At the close of 1662 it was £700 in arrear ; and in a letter to Lord Herbert he stated that "he had nothing to keep him alive, with two relations more, a daughter and a nephew, who were attending his sickly condition." He also petitioned the House of Commons, stating in his petition that "he, Samuel Hartlib, senior, had for thirty years and more exerted himself in procuring rare collections of manuscripts in all the parts of learning, which he had freely imported, transcribed, and printed, and sent to such as were most capable of making use of them ; also the best experiments in husbandry and manufactures, which, by printing, he has published for the benefit of this age and posterity." What the fate of his petition was, we are uninformed ; it probably met with neglect. We are also left in ignorance of the time of his death.

The statements given above of the condition of the family and fortune of Hartlib, seem hardly to accord with the following passages in the diary of Samuel Pepys :

"Home and called my wife, and took her to Clodins's, to a great wedding of Nan Hartlib to Mynheer Roder, which was kept at Goring House, with great state, cost, and noble company."—*Diary, July 10, 1660.*

"While I was at dinner, in came Samuel Hartlib and his brother-in-law, now knighted by the King, to request my promise of a ship for them to Holland."—*Ib. August 7, 1660.*

In 1667 he again notices Samuel Hartlib, as it would appear, as being of rather a gallant character.

Nan Hartlib was then evidently the niece, not the

daughter, of the elder Hartlib, who probably had not yet fallen into bad circumstances at the time of her marriage.

HENRY LAWRENCE.

Milton addressed one of his social sonnets to Lawrence, whom he styles “of virtuous father virtuous son.” Warton, who is duteously followed as usual by Todd, makes, we think, a mistake here, when he says “of the *virtuous* son nothing has transpired ;” for he is actually the person of whom he himself gives an account, as the father. It will thus appear. The sonnet, though probably subsequent to 1645, must have been written before Milton lost his sight, that is, before 1653. Now Todd quotes a letter of Lawrence’s, in the Harleian MSS., written in 1646, from which it appears that his son was at that time only thirteen years of age ; but the person to whom Milton addresses his sonnet was apparently a man of about his own time of life, and therefore the person who has been hitherto taken for the father, of whom Warton gives the following account :—

“The *virtuous* father, Henry Lawrencee, was member for Herefordshire in the Little Parliament, which began in 1653, and was active in settling the Protectorate of Cromwell. In consequence of his services he was made President of Cromwell’s Council, where he appears to have signed many severe and arbitrary decrees, not only against the Royalists, but the Brownists, Fifth-Monarchymen, and other sectarists. He continued high in favour with Richard Cromwell. As innovation is progressive, perhaps the son, Milton’s friend, was an Independent and a still warmer Republican. The family appears to have been seated not far from Milton’s neighbourhood in Buckinghamshire, for Henry Lawrencee’s near relation William Lawrence, a writer, and appointed a judge in Scotland by Cromwell, and who was in 1631 a Gentleman Commoner of Trinity College, Oxford, died at Bedfont, near Staines, in Middlesex, in 1682. Hence, says Milton, v. 2,—

'Now that the fields are dank and ways are mire,
Where shall we sometimes meet?' etc.*

Milton, in his first reply to More, written 1654, recites among the most respectable of his friends who contributed to form the Commonwealth, 'Montacutium, Laurentium, summo ingenio ambos optimisque artibus expositos, etc.'; where by *Montacutium* we are to understand Edward Montague, Earl of Manchester,† who, while Lord Kimbolton, was one of the members of the House of Commons impeached by the King, and afterwards a leader in the rebellion. I believe they both deserved this panegyrie."

Mr. Todd adds that "Lawrence, the *virtuous father*, is the author of a work suited to Milton's taste; on the subject of which, I make no doubt, he and the author 'by the fire helped to waste many a sullen day.' It is entitled Of our Communion and Warre with Angels, etc. Printed Anno Dom. 1646, 4to, 189 pages. The dedication is: 'To my Most deare and Most honoured Mother, the *Lady Lawrence*.' I suppose him also to be the same Henry Lawrence who printed A Vindication of the Scriptures and Christian Ordinances, 1649, Lond., 4to."

CYRIAC SKINNER.

Cyriac Skinner was the third son of William Skinner, Esq., of Thornton College, in Lincolnshire, son and heir of Sir Vineent Skinner, Knight. His mother was Bridget, second daughter of the celebrated Sir Edward Coke, to whom the poet alludes in the beginning of the first son-

* It would actually appear as if Warton supposed this sonnet to have been written at Horton, and that the place of meeting was some roadside alehouse.

† Rather, we think, Edward Montague, afterwards Earl of Sandwich. Milton in this passage does not speak of either him or Lawrence as his friend. The only personal friends whom he names in the list of the supporters of Cromwell, not the formers of the Commonwealth, are Fleetwood and Overton; but those two are among the "vel amicitia vel fama mihi cognitos."

net which he addressed to him,—an allusion hitherto not understood by the commentators. The year of his birth is not known; but as his father died in 1627, it was probably some years before that date. He himself died in the last year of the seventeenth century.

Wood tells us that Cyriac Skinner was one of Milton's pupils. From a letter of Andrew Marvell's, it appears that in 1653, when Milton was living in Petty France, Skinner "had got near him;" but as he appears to have always dwelt in the parish of St. Martin's-in-the-Fields, this is perhaps all that is meant. Wood also tells us that Skinner was, with Harrington, Wildman, and others, a member of the celebrated Rota Club, which used to hold its meetings at the Turk's Head, in New Palace-yard, Westminster, in which he occasionally took the chair. He calls him "a merchant's son of London, an ingenious young gentleman, and scholar to Jo. Milton." It is supposed that it is of him also that Aubrey speaks, when he says that the manuscript of Milton's *Idea Theologicae* "is in the hands of Mr. Skinner, a merchant's son, in Mark Lane. *Mem.* There was one Mr. Skinner, of the Jerker's Office, up two pair of stairs, at the Custom House." It is evident from this that Aubrey knew little about Cyriac Skinner (and *he* was probably Wood's authority), if it is him he means; for he was a merchant himself, and, as we have seen, the son of a country gentleman. Warton says, "I find one Cyriac Skinner, I know not if the same, a member of Trinity College, Oxford, in 1640;" and it seems to us not at all unlikely that it was the same, and that Wood was mistaken in calling him a scholar (if by that he meant a pupil) of Milton's. Nothing further is known of Cyriac Skinner.

Exclusive however of the two sonnets addressed to

Cyriac Skinner, the name has obtained some celebrity in connection with Milton's great theologic work. From the passage of Aubrey, quoted above, it appears that such a work was known to exist; but no one had any idea of what had been its fate. At length, in the year 1823, Mr. Lemon, the Deputy Keeper of the State Papers, when making his researches in the Old State Paper Office, chanced to find in one of the presses a Latin manuscript with the title "Johannis Miltoni Angli de Doctrina Christiana, ex Sacris duntaxat Libris petita, Disquisitionum Libri duo posthumus." It was wrapped up in two or three sheets of printed paper, with a great many letters, informations, etc., relating to the Popish Plots of 1677 and 1678, and the Rye House Plot of 1683. The parcel also contained a complete and corrected copy of what are called Milton's State Letters; and the whole was enclosed in an envelope, addressed *To Mr. Skinner, Merch^t.*

This then,—for no one that reads it can have a doubt of it,—was the celebrated treatise, erroneously termed by Aubrey, *Idea Theologiae*. The question is, how it came to be in the State Paper Office. Mr. Lemon made at first various conjectures, such as a seizure of the papers of Cyriac Skinner when he was engaged in one of the many conspiracies of the time, etc.; but his further researches discovered the truth, to the following effect.

There was a person named Daniel Skinner, in all probability a nephew of Cyriac's, and who, it is likely, was also Aubrey's "merchant's son in Mark Lane." He was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge; and it was to him, and not to his uncle, that Milton had consigned the manuscript treatise, which he sent over to Holland, along with a transcript of the State Letters, in order to have them printed by Elzevir. His own account is: "The works of

Milton having been left behind him to me, which, out of pure indiscretion, not dreaming any prejudice might accrue to me, I had agreed with a printer at Amsterdam to have printed. As good fortune would have it, he has not printed one tittle of them. About a month ago, there creeps out into the world a little imperfect book of Milton's State Letters, procured to be printed by one Pitts, a bookseller in London, which he had bought of a poor fellow that had formerly got them surreptitiously from Milton." Perhaps this publication gave some uneasiness to the Government, and inquiries were made after other manuscripts of Milton's; for we find that on the 20th November, 1676, Dan. Elzevir wrote as follows to Sir Joseph Williamson, one of the Secretaries of State:—"That about a year before Mr. Skinner put into his hands this collection of *Letters*, and a *Treatise on Theology*, with directions to print them; but that on examining them he found many things in them which, in his opinion, had better be suppressed than divulged; that he declined printing them; and that Mr. Skinner had lately been at Amsterdam, had expressed himself to be highly gratified that he had not commenced the printing of those works, and then *took away the manuscripts*."

It being known now that the MSS. were in the possession of Skinner, and that he was in Paris, Dr. Isaac Barrow, the Master of his College, wrote to him the following February, ordering him to return under penalty of expulsion. "We do also warn you," he says, "*that if you shall publish any writing mischievous to the Church or State*, you will thence incur a forfeiture of your interest here. I hope God will give you the wisdom and grace to take warning." In the letter to a friend, to whom he enclosed this, he says: "I am sorry for the miscarriages of *that*

wild young man." Dr. Barrow's letter was delivered to Skinner, *before witness*, in the following month, by a Mr. Perwich, who writes thus to the Secretary of Sir Joseph Williamson :—" I found him much surprised, and yet at the same time slighting any constraining orders of the Superior of his College, or any benefit he expected thence; but as to Milton's works [*which*] he intended to have printed, though he saith that part which he had in MSS. are no way to be objected to either with regard to royalty and [*q^o* or] government, he hath desisted from causing them to be printed, having left them in Holland; and that he intends, notwithstanding the College summons, to go for Italy this summer."

It is probable however that Skinner was induced to return to England, where he had an interview with Sir Joseph Williamson, who prevailed on him to surrender his manuscripts; and as Sir Joseph, instead of, as had been the custom, carrying away his papers when he went out of office, left them after him, Milton's treatise remained undiscovered and unknown till the time arrived when it could be published without injury to his fame.

NOTES.



NOTE A.

AUTHORITIES.

MILTON's own Latin poems supply a few incidents of his life; and in his *Apology for Sinectymnuus* and his *Defensio Secunda*, he has furnished us with several interesting circumstances of his early life and his travels on the Continent. From his Latin letters also a few particulars may be gleaned.

John Aubrey, the celebrated antiquary, who was personally acquainted with Milton, left in manuscript several circumstances relating to the biography of the poet. These furnished materials to Wood for his account of Milton in the *Athenae Oxonienses*, and they have been published in the present century.

Edward Phillips, the poet's youngest nephew, when publishing a translation of his uncle's Latin Epistles in 1694, prefixed to it an account of his life. This, though more brief than were to be desired, is extremely interesting, and is valuable as being the work of one so intimately connected with its subject. But we must recollect that it was probably written from memory only, more than twenty years after the death of the poet, and nearly half a century from the time that Phillips had been residing in his house. It may therefore not be free from error.

In 1698, four years after Phillips, John Toland, the well-known deistic writer, prefixed a Life to the folio edition of Milton's prose works. It is written in a grave and manly tone, and furnishes some additional particulars. His account of his materials is as follows:—"I heard some particulars from a person that had once been his amanuensis, which were confirmed to me by his daughter, now dwelling in London, and by a letter written to me, at my

desire, by his last wife, who is still alive. I perused the papers of one of his nephews, learned what I could in discourse with the other, and lastly consulted such of his acquaintance as, after the best inquiry, I was able to discover." It may surprise one after this to find the Life so meagre as it is; but the truth is, biography is an art, and those who do not possess it are unable to make a proper use of the materials which may be at their disposal.

In 1725 Elijah Fenton prefixed an elegant sketch of Milton's Life to an edition of his poems; but it contained nothing that was not previously known.

Jonathan Richardson, the painter, published in 1734—in conjunction with his son, who possessed the learning in which he was himself deficient—Notes on Milton, to which he prefixed a Life, containing a few particulars not to be found in those of Toland or Phillips, and which he had obtained from Pope, or from the poet's granddaughter.

The learned and laborious Dr. Thomas Birch, edited in 1738 a new edition of the prose works; and in the Life which he prefixed to it, his researches enabled him to add several interesting particulars. He was the first to direct attention to what is called the Cambridge Manuscript of Comus and some of the other poems.

Newton's edition of Milton's Paradise Lost appeared first in 1749. The Life is tamely but impartially written, and contains hardly any additional matter.

The Life of Milton has since been written by the vigorous but strongly prejudiced Johnson, the tame and super-elegant Hayley, the dry and ponderous Todd,* the impetuous and violent Symmons, the just, moderate, and elegant Mitford, and others; but of necessity they could add little to the previous stock. Thomas Warton had however, in the second edition of the Minor Poems, in 1791, brought to light from the archives of Doctors' Commons, Milton's Nuncupative Will and the Depositions connected with it, which furnish some very interesting particulars respecting the domestic life of the poet in his latter years. Early in the present century, Mr. Lemon discovered in the State Paper Office various documents relating to the Powell family, and also made extracts from the Orders of Council during the time of Milton's secretaryship, all of which appeared for the first time in 1809 in Todd's second

* We trust we shall be excused when we say that, in our opinion, Todd's Life of Milton is the very *beau idéal* of bad biography.

edition of the Poetical Works. Finally, in 1823, the researches of Mr. Lemon brought to light the long-lost *De Doctrina Christiana*, and some documents connected with it, which will be found in the Bishop of Winchester's Preliminary Observations, and in the later editions of Todd's Milton. Additional particulars relating to Milton and his family have been discovered by Mr. Hunter, and published by him in his tract entitled 'Milton.'

For our account of Milton's family and friends we have been chiefly indebted to Warton in his edition of the Minor Poems, and to Godwin's Lives of Edward and John Phillips.

NOTE B.

THE MILTON FAMILY.

The account of the Milton family given in the text, and derived from Phillips and Aubrey,—which last had his information chiefly from Milton himself or his brother,—may be regarded as the family account. We are therefore disposed to look on it as being, like such accounts in general, true in the main, though possibly incorrect in some of the particulars. Among the circumstances which we should feel inclined to regard as correct, are those of Milton's grandfather having held an employment under the Crown, and his having sent his son to the adjacent University. These points however have been of late contested by the learned and ingenious Mr. Hunter, in his tract on Milton. We will here state his objections.

"Much," says he, "as I have seen of documentary evidence relating to Shotover at that period, such as Presentments and Accounts, which are the kind of documents in which we might expect to find the name, I have seen no mention of any Milton having held any office in the Forest, but only having transactions with those who did so." He does not however inform us of what years these documents were; and if they were no older than those of which he gives the date, they cannot be held to prove anything either way.

Among the Records of the Exchequer, Mr. Hunter tells us, is a series of Rolls, named the Recusant Rolls, in which are entered the fines levied on Recusants, as those were termed who did not show their acquiescence in the Reformation by attending at their parish churches. "Each county," says Mr. Hunter, "is treated

apart; and in the Roll for Oxfordshire, of the forty-third of Queen Elizabeth, 1601, we find the name of ‘Richard Milton, of Stanton St. John, yeoman.’ On the 13th of July, 1601, this person was fined in the sum of £60, for not having resorted to his parish church for the three months following the 6th of December, 1600. This was ruinous work to a family of but slender fortunes; but he was not subdued by it, for a second fine, of the same amount, was imposed upon him soon after, for not having attended church from the 13th of July, 1601, to the 4th of October following, nor having made his submission, nor promised to be conformable, pursuant to the statute of the twenty-third of Elizabeth.”

“We have therefore,” he pursues, “found a Milton, living on the borders of Shotover Forest, a man of a certain substance, and so zealously attached to the ancient form and order of the English Church, that he ventured to incur the severe and extreme penalties that were imposed upon him; and since he lived at the close of the reign of Queen Elizabeth, which is the chronological period of the grandfather of the poet, it can hardly be doubted, that in this Richard Milton of Stanton St. John, we have found the poet’s grandfather, by whom his father is said to have been disinherited.”

This is certainly rather like jumping to a conclusion. Might it not have occurred to the mind of so acute a person as Mr. Hunter, that Milton’s grandfather might have been dead in 1601, and that his son John might have been an only son, if not an only child, and so the family have been extinct in Oxfordshire? He himself acknowledges that the phrase, “natus genere *honesto*,”* which Milton uses when speaking of himself, would not be very correct if his grandfather had been only a yeoman; and he endeavours to get over this difficulty by supposing, that the *yeoman* of the Roll was written “by no friendly hand,”—a perfectly gratuitous assumption. He also acknowledges the fact of the Spread Eagle being the armorial ensign of Milton’s family, and he has not shown that the yeomen of those days were entitled to have armorial bearings.

Mr. Hunter’s doubt as to the University education of Milton’s father is thus stated:—

“We are told that he was sent by his father to Christ Church, but no trace of him as a member of that house is now to be found;

* This answers to Pope’s “Of gentle bloods,” when speaking of his family of both sides, *i. e.* belonging to the gentry. Heinsius says, “L. Elzevirus ad-
fimat certo sibi constare hominem (Milton) esse nobili loco natum.”

and if any such trace existed, it could hardly have escaped the research of two such men as Anthony Wood and Dr. Philip Bliss.” But we find that Wood also did not succeed in finding any trace of Milton’s having had a degree at Oxford, as he himself stated to Aubrey.

NOTE C.

MILTON’S PUNISHMENT AT THE UNIVERSITY.

This fact we learn from the poet himself :—

“Jam nec arundiferum mihi cura revisere Camum,
 Nec dudum vetiti me laris angit amor ;
 Nuda nec arva placent, umbrasque negantia molles :
 Quam male Phœbicolis convenient ille locus !
 Nec duri libet usque minas perferre Magistri,
 Ceteraque ingenio non subeunda meo.
 Si sit hoc exilium patrios adiisso penates,
 Et vacuum curis otia grata sequi,
 Non ego vel profugi nomen sortemque recuso,
 Lætus et exiliis conditione fruor.” —*Eleg.* i. 11.

Now surely no one who reads these lines is justified in inferring anything more than that Milton was, for some offence or other, in College phrase, *rusticated*, *i. e.* ordered to quit the University for a limited period. That it could not have been long is proved by his having taken his degree at the regular time, so he must have kept all his terms. Aubrey however says, “ His first tutor was Mr. Chappel, from whom receiving some unkindness (*he whipt him*), he was afterwards . . . transferred to the tuition of one Mr. Tovey.” The Tory and High Church Warton and Johnson eagerly catch at this note of Aubrey’s, assume its truth, and assert that Milton was publicly whipped previous to his rustication, and suppose the poet to allude to it in *Ceteraque ingenio non subeunda meo*. It must raise, we fancy, a smile in even the most sombre, to find the serious Milton thus gravely telling his friend that he did not much like being whipped.

But, after all, where did Aubrey get his information ? He was not himself a Cambridge man, and the poet or his brother hardly gave it to him. Besides, if it was a matter of notoriety, it could scarcely have escaped the knowledge of Hall (?), or Dumoulin, who wrote so many years earlier than Aubrey. Little stress then, we apprehend, can be laid on his assertion. Even though it was the

custom to use the rod in those times at Oxford and Cambridge, it was only on the younger students that it was employed in general; and that by the *Tutor*, and not by the Master of the College, and it is only of the latter that Milton speaks. It is unfortunate that the author has not dated his two elegies to Diodati; but from the tone of this elegy, his speaking of his frequenting the theatres and Gray's Inn Walks, and admiring the beauties he saw there, and fearing the loss of his heart, we may perhaps infer, that when he wrote it he had been two or three years at the University, so that he was quite beyond the whipping age. The whole story is, we are convinced, a baseless fiction.

Milton, we know, had a thorough contempt for the course of studies pursued at the Universities. To this he may have given expression in various ways; and by this and some acts of insubordination he may have drawn on himself the indignation of Dr. Bainbridge, the Master, who is said to have been a strict disciplinarian, and who was probably a narrow-minded pedant. . For this he was ordered to leave the University for a short time; and the period was, in all probability, a very brief one, for it appears to have been in the spring—an active season at College—that he wrote this elegy, and he speaks in it of returning shortly to the banks of Cam.

NOTE D.

MILTON AND THE EGERTON FAMILY.

The Areades was represented before the Countess Dowager of Derby, at Harefield House, near Uxbridge, and Comus before her son-in-law the Earl of Bridgewater, at Ludlow Castle, in Shropshire. How Milton happened to be the writer of them we will attempt to explain when we come to the consideration of these poems in the sequel of our work; in this Note it is our object to show the utter instability of the structure of adulation and sycophancy toward the descendants of those noble persons which Warton and Todd have conspired to raise.

Alice, the sixth daughter of Sir John Spenser of Althorpe, had been, under the name of Amaryllis, the theme of the verse of her real or supposed kinsman, the poet of the Faerie Queene, in his ‘Colin Clout’s come home again;’ and he had dedicated to her his Tears of the Muses. She married Ferdinando Lord Strange,

who, on the death of his father in 1594, became Earl of Derby, but who died in the following year. In 1600 she married the Lord Keeper, afterwards Lord Chancellor Egerton, a widower. He died in 1617, leaving her again a widow. She seems to have spent the remainder of her days at Harefield House, where she died on the 20th of January, 1635-6. The Earl of Bridgewater, the Lord Chancellor's eldest son, had married one of her daughters by Lord Strange.

It is the theory of Warton that this noble lady, who in her younger days had been the patroness of Spenser, admiring the poetic talents of her young neighbour at Horton, took him under her patronage, and that in consequence Milton was a frequent visitor at Harefield, where of course he became acquainted with Lord Bridgewater and his family. When therefore the entertainment of Arcades was projected at Harefield, Milton, to show his gratitude to the Countess, supplied the poetry ; and when the success of that piece had emboldened the young Egertons to project an entertainment on a grander scale, to celebrate their father's entrance on his office of Lord President of Wales, the Muse of Horton gladly and gratefully once more exerted her powers in the service of her noble patrons, and Comus was the magnificent result.

Now we may observe, in opposition to this fine theory, that Milton at this time was almost totally unknown to fame as a poet. His poetic efforts had been nearly all in Latin, and their renown had hardly gone beyond the walls of Cambridge, for he had never printed a line. It may however be said, that his friend Henry Lawes, the musician, who was in the service, as it was termed, of the family, may have magnified his talents in the ears of the Countess, and thus have directed her patronage toward the young poet, who accepted it with gratitude. But this will appear a most improbable supposition when we consider the character and position of Milton. Descended from an ancient and honourable family, of a noble and independent spirit, conscious of possessing the highest powers given unto man by God, and in worldly circumstances which placed him, if not in affluence, far above want, he could ill have brooked the tone of superiority assumed, often unconsciously, by the possessors of worldly wealth and titles over those who, however superior in other respects, are destitute of these advantages. All through his life he seems to have had be-

fore his eyes the beautiful example of the worthy woman of Shunem, who, when the prophet, in return for her kindness, offered to exert his influence in her favour with the King or his officers, replied, “I dwell among mine own people.” At no period did he seek the society and intimacy of those who were great in the world’s regard; his delight was in friends of his own rank in life, like-minded with himself, like him devoted to the pursuits of literature and science: these alone he sought, and with these he was contented. At this very time he was personally unacquainted even with the learned and accomplished Sir Henry Wootton, who lived at Eton, some miles nearer to him than Harefield. Further, when we consider the manners of the time in which the nobility kept up so much pomp and state in their abodes, and in their intercourse with their inferiors in rank, the supposition becomes still more incredible. It was not till the eighteenth century that men of genius began to visit at the houses of the aristocracy on somewhat of a footing of equality; and had Milton frequented Harefield House, it must have been in the character of a dependent, or one in its service, as the phrase was.

Todd, without naming any authority, tells us that Milton “had lived in the neighbourhood of Ashridge, the seat of the Earl of Bridgewater,” adding from Warton, “for his father’s house and lands at Horton, near Colnbrook, in Buckinghamshire, were held under the Earl, before whom *Comus* was acted.” It is really very provoking that people will write in such a loose and careless manner. Any one who reads this passage will, if not aware of the truth, naturally infer that Ashridge also is near Colnbrook; whereas, if Mr. Todd had taken the trouble to look at a map, he would have seen that it is near Berkhamstead in Herts, and little less than twenty miles from Colnbrook.

This is bad enough, but what follows is worse. Todd goes on to tell us, chiefly on his own authority it would seem, that “Milton afterwards lived in Barbican, where the Earl had great property, as well as his town residence Bridgewater House; and though Dr. Johnson observes that Milton had taken a larger house in Barbican for the reception of scholars, it is not improbable that he may have been accommodated with it rent-free by that nobleman, who, it may be supposed, would gladly embrace an opportunity of having in his neighbourhood the admirable author of *Comus*, and of promoting his acquaintance with that finished

scholar, who, being willing, says his nephew Phillips, to impart his learning and knowledge to his relations, and the sons of gentlemen who were his intimate friends, might afford to his family at least the pleasure of his conversation, if not to some of them the advantages of his instruction."

No doubt the Archdeacon of Cleveland thought this a piece of very pretty writing, and very gratifying to the representatives of the Earl of Bridgewater. But, unfortunately for him, it is as much at variance with chronology as his preceding one was with topography. It was in 1645 or 1646 that Milton took his house in Barbican; and as the inscription on Lord Bridgewater's monument tells us that "he was a loyal subject to his sovereign in those worst of times when it was accounted treason not to be a traitor," it is hardly possible that he was living quietly within the enemy's quarters, and exhibiting a rather unusual kind of generosity to one of the most determined foes of the cause of his Royal master, and of the Church, to which the said Earl was "a dutiful son in her persecution, as well as in her great splendour."*

There remains one more piece of this Egerton idolatry. In a note on the epitaph on the Marchioness of Winchester, Warton, after telling us that she was of a Cheshire family, adds that "it is natural to suppose that it was well acquainted with the family of Lord Bridgewater belonging to the same county. It is therefore," he continues, "not improbable that Milton wrote this elegy, another poetical favour, in consequence of his acquaintance with the Egerton family." Of this supposition we will show the absolute impossibility when we come to treat of that elegy.

The materials of this note will be found in Todd's Introduction to *Comus*.

NOTE E.

PASSAGES IN MILTON'S WRITINGS RELATING TO HIS FIRST WIFE.

"Not that license and levity and unconsented breach of faith,

* Speaking of the applause which Milton received for his *Defensio*, Todd adds (i. 80) in a note: "He perhaps lost the friendship of others on this occasion. Certain it seems that the amiable and learned Earl of Bridgewater, who had performed the part of the First Brother in his *Comus*, then disdained his acquaintance. On the title-page of the *Defensio*, now in Lord Francis Egerton's possession, that nobleman has written: *Liber igne, author sura dignissimi.*" He lost what he probably never had possessed.

should herein be countenanced, but that some concessionable and tender pity might be had of those who have unwarily, in a thing they never practised before, made themselves the bondmen of a luckless and helpless matrimony.”—*Doctrine and Discipline of Divorce.*

“And what greater nakedness or unfitness of mind than that which hinders even the solaces and peaceful society of the married couple? And what hinders that more than the unfitness and defectiveness of an unconjugal mind?”—*Ibid.*

“For in single life, the absence and remoteness of a helper might inure him to expect his own comforts out of himself, or to seek with hope; but here the continual sight of his deluded thoughts, without cure, must needs be to him, if especially his complexion incline him to melancholy, a daily trouble and pain of loss, in some degree like that which reprobates feel.”—*Ibid.*

“But some are ready to object, that the disposition ought seriously to be considered before. But let them know again, that for all the wariness that can be used, it may yet befall a discreet man to be mistaken in his choice; and we have plenty of examples. The soberest and best-governed men are least practised in these affairs; and who knows not that the bashful muteness of a virgin, may oftentimes hide all the unliveliness and natural sloth which is really unfit for conversation? Nor is there that freedom of access granted, or presumed, as may suffice to a perfect discerning, till too late; and where any indisposition is suspected, what more usual than the persuasion of friends that acquaintance, as it increases, will amend all? And lastly, it is not strange, though many who have spent their youth chastely are in some things not so quick-sighted, while they haste too eagerly to light the nuptial torch. Nor is it therefore for a modest error that a man should forfeit so great a happiness, and no charitable means to release him; since they who have lived most loosely, by reason of their bold accustoming, prove most successful in their matches, because their wild affections, unsettling at will, have been as so many divorcees to teach them experience. Whereas the sober man, honouring the appearance of modesty, and hoping well of every social virtue under that veil, may easily chance to meet, if not with a body impenetrable, yet, often with a mind to all other due conversation inaccessible, and to all the more estimable and superior purposes of matrimony useless and almost lifeless; and what a

solace, what a fit help such a consort would be through the whole life of a man, is less pain to conjecture than to have experience.”—*Ibid.*

“ And yet there follows upon this a worse temptation. For if he be such as hath spent his youth unblamably, and laid up his chieffest earthly comforts in the enjoyment of a contented marriage, nor did neglect the furtherance which was to be obtained therein by constant prayers, when he shall find himself bound fast to an uncomplying discord of nature, or, as it oft happens, to an image of earth and phlegm, with whom he looked to be the copartner of a sweet and gladsome society ; and sees withal that his bondage is now inevitable : though he be almost the strongest Christian, he will be ready to despair in virtue, and mutiny against Divine Providence.”—*Ibid.*

The following passages of *Paradise Lost*, written many years after her death, evidently relate to his first wife :—

“ Being as I am, why didst not thou, the head,
Command me absolutely not to go,
Going into such danger, as thou saidest ?
Too facile then, thou didst not much gainsay ;
Nay, didst permit, approve, and fair dismiss.
Hadst thou been firm and fixed in thy dissent,
Neither had I transgressed, nor thou with me.”

Par. Lost, ix. 1155.

“ For either

He never shall find out fit mate, but such
As some misfortune brings him, or mistake ;
Or whom he wishes most shall seldom gain
Through her perverseness, but shall see her gained
By a far worse ; or if she love, withheld
By parents ; or his happiest choice too late
Shall meet, already linked and wedlock-bound
To a fell adversary, his hate or shame :
Which infinite calamity shall cause
To human life, and household peace confound.”—*Ibid.* x. 898.

“ She ended weeping, and her lowly plight,
Immovable till peace obtained from fault
Acknowledged and deplored, in Adam wrought
Commissioner. Soon his heart relented

Toward her, his life so late and sole delight,
 Now at his feet submissive, in distress ;
 Creature so fair, his reconcilement seeking,
 His counsels, whom she had displeased, his aid.
 As one disarmed, his anger all he lost.”—*Ibid.* x. 937.

Still later, when far advanced in life, and after having been in the enjoyment of the society of two most amiable and affectionate wives, the pains caused him by Mary Powell,—his memory perhaps being quickened by the unduteous conduct of her daughter Mary,—seem to have recurred strongly to his mind. She is evidently the Dalila of his *Samson Agonistes*, and the following passages of that poem seem to refer especially to his domestic troubles :—

“Out, out, hyena ! these are thy wonted arts,
 And arts of every woman false like thee,
 To break all faith, all vows, deceive, betray,
 Then as repentant to submit, beseech,
 And reconcilement move with feigned remorse,
 Confess and promise wonders in her change ;
 Not truly penitent, but chief to try
 Her husband, how far urged his patience bears,
 His virtue or weakness which way to assail ;
 Then with more caution and instructed skill
 Again transgresses and again submits ;
 That wisest and best men full oft beguiled,
 With goodness principled not to reject
 The penitent, but ever to forgive,
 Are drawn to wear out miserable days,
 Entangled with a poisonous bosom-snake.”—*V.* 748.

“*Chor.* Yet beauty, though injurious, hath strange power,
 After offence returning, to regain
 Love once possessed, nor can be easily
 Repulsed, without much inward passion felt
 And surcest sting of amorous remorse.

Sams. Love’s quarrels oft in pleasing concord end ;
 Not wedlock-treachery, endangering life.

Chor. It is not virtue, wisdom, valour, wit,
 Strength, comeliness of shape or amplest merit,
 That woman’s love can win, or long inherit ;

But what it is, hard is to say,
 Harder to hit
 Which way soever men refer it."—*V.* 1003.

Whate'er it be, to wisest men and best
 Seeming at first all heavenly under virgin veil,
 Soft, modest, meek, demure,
 Once joined the contrary she proves, a thorn
 Intestine, far within defensive arms
 A cleaving mischief, in his way to virtue
 Adverse and turbulent, or by her charms
 Draws him away enslaved
 With dotage, and his sense depraved
 To folly and shameful deeds, which ruin ends."—*V.* 1034.

NOTE F.

MILTON AND THE POWELLS.

In the year 1826 the researches of the indefatigable Mr. Lemon brought to light from among the Royalist-Composition Papers in the State-Paper Office a number of documents relating to the affairs of Mr. Powell, Milton's father-in-law. The curious will find them *in extenso* in Todd's Life of Milton; here we will give those relating more especially to Milton's connection with the Powell family.

Milton's Petition.

To the Honourable the Commissioners for Sequestration at Haberdashers' Hall, the Petition of John Milton

Sheweth,

That he, being to compound by the late Act for certain lands of Whately, in Oxfordshire, belonging to Mr. Richard Powell, late of Forest Hill in the same county, by reason of an extent which he hath upon the same lands by a statute, did put in his petition about the middle of August last, which was referred accordingly; but having had important business ever since, by order of the Council of State, he hath had no time to proceed in the perfecting of his composition; and in the meantime finds that order hath been given out from hence to forbid his tenants to pay him rent. He therefore now desires he may have all convenient dispatch, and that the Order of Sequestering may be recalled, and that the composition

may be moderated as much as may be in regard that Mrs. Powell, the widow of the said Mr. Richard Powell, hath her cause depending before the Commissioners in the Painted Chamber, for breach of Articles, who have adjudged her satisfaction to be made for the great damage done her by seizing and selling the personal estate divers days after the Articles were sealed. But by reason of the expiring of that Court she hath received as yet no satisfaction, and beside she hath her thirds out of that land, which was not considered when her husband followed his composition; and lastly, the taxes, free quartering, and finding of arms were not then considered, which have been since very great and are likely to be greater.

And your petitioner shall be ready to pay what shall be thought reasonable at any day that shall be appointed.

(Signed)

JOHN MILTON.*

25 Feb. 1650.

A Particular of the lands, late Richard Powell's, of Forest Hill, in the county of Oxford, now under extent, and for which JOHN MILTON, Esq., desireth to compound:—

The said Richard Powell was seised in his demesne as of fee of the tithe-corn of Whately and certain cottages ther of the clear yearly value of	60 0 0
	per annum.
The said Richard was seised also in his demesne as of fee of three yards $\frac{1}{2}$ of land arable and pasture of the clear yearly value of	20 0 0
	per annum.
Out of which he craveth to be allowed for the thirds which he payeth to Mrs. Anne Powell, the relict of the said Richard Powell, for her dower	26 13 4
And also craveth that his just debt of three hundred pounds, as he hath depos'd, may be allowed upon his composition	300 0 0

JOHN MILTON.

* In the margin of this document there is in Milton's own handwriting as follows (of which a fac-simile will be found in Todd): "I doe (am ready to be erased) swear that this debt for which I am to compound, according to my petition, is a true and real debt, as will appear upon record."

"JOHN MILTON.

"Jur. 25 Feb. 1650 [in another hand]."

Whereas, Richard Powell, of Forest Hill, in the county of Oxford, Gent., and William Hearne, late citizen and goldsmith of London, deceased, by their writing or recognizance of the nature of a statute-staple, bearing date the eleventh day of June, which was in the third year of the reign of the late King Charles of England, etc., made and provided for the recovery of debts, and taken, acknowledged, and sealed, before Sir Nicholas Hide, Knight, then Lord Chief Justice of the Court, then called the King's Bench at Westminster, did acknowledge themselves to owe unto JOHN MILTON, then of the University of Cambridge, Gent., son of John Milton, citizen and scrivener of London, the sum of £500 of lawful money of England, which said statute or recognizance is, by a writing bearing even date therewith, defeasanced* for the payment of £312 of like money unto JOHN MILTON the son, his executors, administrators, or assigns, on the 12th day of December then next ensuing, as by the said statute or recognizance and defeasance thereupon, whereunto relation being had more at large may appear. Now I, JOHN MILTON, the son (being one and the said party before mentioned for Cognizee, in the said statute or recognizance) do make oath that, since the extending of the said statute, I have received at several times in part of satisfaction of my said just and principal debt, with damages for the same, and my costs of suit, the sum of one hundred and fourscore pounds, or thereabouts, and that there is yet remaining due and owing to me of my said principal money, interest, and costs of suit, £300 or thereabouts. And I do further make oath that neither I, the said JOHN MILTON, or any other for me, or by my direction, privity, or consent, have or hath released, or otherwise discharged the said statute or recognizance; neither do I know or conceive any reason or cause, either in law or equity, why I should not receive the said remainder of my said debt, damages, and cost of suit.

(Signed) JOHN MILTON, { Jurit coram Com^{ris},
28^o Feb. 1650.

(Signed) E. WINSLOW.

Indorsed, "Milton, John, Esq., 4^o Mar. 1650."

Fine £130.

* The meaning of this is, that by a counter-deed, named a *defeasance*, they would, on payment of the smaller sum named in the latter, be exonerated from the payment of the larger one named in the deed called a *statute-staple*.

Mrs. Powell's Petition.

To the Hon^{ble} Commissioners for Composition, etc., the humble Petition of Anne Powell, widow, etc.,

Sheweth,

That your petitioner brought a considerable portion to her said husband, which was worth to him £3000, yet through the carelessness of her friends, and relying upon her husband's goodwill therein, he having had many losses in his estate by reason of the wars and otherwise, your petitioner had no jointure made unto her, nor hath anything at all left her but her thirds, which is due by law, for the maintenance of herself and eight children, having sustained £1000 in their personal estate's loss by the Committees in the county, contrary to the Articles of Oxoñ. She most humbly prays your Honours will please, being the fine is now agreed to be paid by MR. MILTON for the said estate, that she may continue the enjoyment of her thirds as formerly, which she humbly conceives, had not the fine been paid as aforesaid, yet your Honours would not have abridged your petitioner of her thirds in this case, for the maintenance of herself and poor children.

And she shall pray, etc.,

(Signed) ANNE POWELL.

19^o April, 1651.

The pet^r left to the law.

On this petition the following notes are made:—

“ By the law she might recover her thirds without doubt, but she is so extreme poor she hath not wherewithall to prosecute; and besides Mr. Milton is a harsh and choleric man, and married Mrs. Powell's daughter, who would be undone if any such course were taken against him by Mrs. Powell, he having turned away his wife heretofore for a long space upon some other occasion [*a small occasion effaced*].”

This note ensuing Mr. Milton wrote, whereof this is a copy:—

Although I have compounded for my extent, and shall be so much the longer in receiving my debt, yet at the request of Mrs. Powell, in regard of her present necessities, I am contented, as far as belongs to my consent, to allow her the 3rds of what I receive

from that estate, if the Com^{rs} shall so order it that what I allow her may not be reckoned upon my account.

(*Indorsed*)—*The estate is wholly extended, and a saving as to the 3rd prayed, but not granted. We cannot therefore allow the 3rd to the petitioner.*

In another petition, in the following July, Mrs. Powell prays that as Mr. Milton will not pay her her third without the order of the Commissioners, that such order may be made “for the payment of her said third, and the arrears thereof, to preserve her and her children from starving.”

Petition of Mrs. Powell.

To the Hon^{ble}, etc. etc.,

Sheweth,

That your petitioner's late husband was comprised in the Articles of Oxford, as appears by the certificate of the late Lord General Fairfax, already before this Court in your pet^{rs} behalf: that within the time limited by the said Articles, your petitioner's said husband preferred his petition at Goldsmiths' Hall, and was admitted to compound according to the said Articles, for his estate real and personal, as may appear by the certificate of the Com^{rs} for compounding, already likewise before this Honourable Court: that her said husband died seised of an estate in fee, lying in Wheatley, in the county of Oxoñ, whereof your pet^r claimeth her dower, which upon her said husband's death was assigned to her by the heir of her said husband, and accordingly was enjoyed for some time by your pet^r: that JOHN MILTON, Esq., did extend the said lands in fee, by virtue of a statute to him acknowledged by your pet^r said husband, before the late wars, but long after your pet^r marriage to her said husband. The said JOHN MILTON, by virtue of an Act of Parliament, 1^{mo} August, 1650, was required to bring in a Particular of the lands so extended by him to the Com^{rs} for compounding, and accordingly did pay the composition due for the said lands; and your pet^r offered also to compound for her dower, but could neither be admitted to compound for her said dower, nor obtain an order from the said Com^r to receive it without a composition; so that for nigh these two years she hath been and still is debarred of her dower, which is most justly due unto her. Your pet^r humbly prayeth, that she may be forthwith

restored to her dower, most wrongfully detained from her: that your Honours will seriously consider this, and those other great pressures (represented in a former petition, now depending before you), under which your pet^r, being a mother of seven fatherless children,—since one of them, Capt. William Powell, Capt.-Lieut. to Lieut.-Gen. Monk, was some few days past slain in Scotland, in the service of Parliament,—hath for a long time groaned, by the most injurious violation of her Articles: and that you will speedily proceed to give her such relief in this and her other grievances by her Articles, and otherwise in justice she makes suit to have.

And your pet^r shall ever pray, etc.,

(Signed) ANNE POWELL.

(Signed) TRACEY PAUNCEFOTE, Reg^r.

NOTE G.

PORTRAITS OF MILTON.

Mr. Todd enters at great length into this subject in a note, in his Life of Milton. The following are the most important particulars which it contains.

Milton's portrait was painted in 1618, when he was a boy of ten years of age, by Cornelius Jansen. It is a half-length, with a lace ruff. It belonged to Milton's widow, and, after her death, was purchased by Mr. Charles Stanhope, for twenty guineas; at whose death, in 1760, it was purchased by Mr. Thomas Hollis, for thirty-one guineas; who, on Lord Harrington's expressing a wish to have it returned, replied, that "his Lordship's whole estate should not repurchase it;" and when his lodgings in Covent Garden took fire, he walked calmly out of the house with this picture in his hand, bestowing no thought on anything else. At the close of the last century it was supposed to be in the possession of Mr. Brand Hollis. It was engraved by J. B. Cipriani in 1760, and may be seen in Hollis's Memoirs.

There is another portrait, which had belonged to Milton's widow, in the possession of the Onslow family, but which is suspected by some not to be a portrait of Milton. Vertue, who engraved it in 1723, said the age it represented was twenty-one. It was also engraved by Houbraken and by Cipriani. The probability seems to be that it is not genuine.

To the edition of the Poems in 1645 was prefixed a portrait by Marshall, under which the poet caused to be engraved some Greek lines expressive of his opinion of its utter faithlessness. In fact, as Mr. Mitford observes, it transforms Milton, who was then only thirty-six, and who always looked younger than he was, “into a puritanical gentleman of fifty.” There is a circumstance in this for which we cannot account. Though we are to suppose that it was drawn in 1645, it says, *anno aetatis vigesimo primo*.

In 1670, prefixed to Milton’s History of Britain was a portrait engraved by Faithorn, from a crayon-drawing by himself, with this legend, “Gul. Faithorn ad vivum delin. et sculpsit. Johannis Miltoni effigies. AEtat. 62. 1670.” This engraving has been often copied,* but as it was not in Faithorn’s best manner, a new copy was made for the first edition of Todd’s Milton, from the original crayon-drawing in the possession of William Baker, Esq. This drawing had passed through the hands of the Richardsons and Tonsons to those of Mr. Baker. It was at the sight of this, when shown to her by Vertue the engraver, among other paintings and engravings, that Deborah Clarke made the exclamation above related. All the best portraits of Milton are taken from it.

There is said to have been a cast in plaster, of Milton, executed when he was about fifty, by one Pierce, who did the marble bust of Sir Christopher Wren in the Bodleian Library, or by Abraham Simon. It belonged to Vertue, from whom it was bought by Mr. Hollis. The busts prefixed to Milton’s Prose Works by Birch, 1738, and by Bacon, 1753, were engraved by Vertue from a bad drawing made from this cast by J. Richardson.

In 1784, Sir Joshua Reynolds gave one hundred guineas for a miniature, said to be that of Milton. The portrait is dressed in black, and the painter’s mark and date are “S. C., 1653.” On the back was written, “This picture belonged to Deborah Milton, who was her father’s amanuensis; at her death, was sold to Sir W. Davenant’s family. It was painted by Mr. Samuel Cooper, who was painter to Oliver Cromwell, at the time Milton was Latin Secretary to the Protector. The painter and poet were near of the same age: Milton was born in 1608, and died in 1674; and Cooper was born in 1609, and died in 1672; and were companions and friends till death parted them. Several encouragers and lovers of the fine arts at that time wanted this picture, particularly Lord

* There is one by Cipriani in Hollis’s Memoirs.

Dorset, Lord Somers, esquire (*sic*), Sir Robert Howard, Dryden, Atterbury, Dr. Aldrich, and Sir John Denham."

This portrait—an engraving from which may be seen in Bohn's edition of Milton's Prose Works—is totally unlike all other portraits of Milton. "I have now," says Sir Joshua, and well he might, "a different idea of the countenance of Milton, which cannot be got from any of the other pictures that I have seen." In fact, let any one look at the portrait (however unlike) done by Marshall when Milton was thirty-six, and this by Cooper when he was forty-two, and say is it possible they could ever have been taken from the same original. Could Deborah Clarke have ever supposed that this and Faithorn's drawing could both have been intended for her father? As this miniature is said strongly to resemble Vandyke's picture of John Selden, many suppose it was done for him by Cooper.* Sir Joshua however died in the belief that it was Milton, for in his will he left *The miniature of Milton, by Cooper*, to the Rev. William Mason.

NOTE II.

FICTIONS RESPECTING MILTON.

The following evident sport of imagination appeared in some newspaper toward the end of the last century†:—

"Believing that the following real circumstance has been but little noticed, we submit the particulars of it as not uninteresting, to the attention of our readers.

"It is well known that in the bloom of youth, and when he pursued his studies at Cambridge, this poet was extremely beautiful. Wandering one day, during the summer, far beyond the precincts of the University into the country, he became so heated and fatigued that, reclining himself at the foot of a tree to rest, he shortly fell asleep. Before he awoke, two ladies, who were foreigners, passed by in a carriage. Agreeably astonished at the loveliness of his appearance, they alighted, and having admired him, as they thought unperceived, for some time, the youngest, who was very handsome, drew a pencil from her pocket, and having written some lines upon a piece of paper, put it with her trembling hand into his own. Immediately afterwards they proceeded on their jour-

* But as Selden died in 1654, aged seventy, how is this possible?

† See Todd's Milton, i. p. 19.

ney. Some of his acquaintances, who were in search of him, had observed this silent adventure, but at too great a distance to discover that the highly favoured party in it was our illustrious bard. Approaching nearer, they saw their friend, to whom, being awakened, they mentioned what had happened. Milton opened the paper, and with surprise read these verses from Guarini :—

Ochi, stelle mortali,
Ministri de' miei mali !
Se chiusi m' uccidite,
Aperti che farete ?

Eager from this moment to find out the fair *incognita*, Milton travelled, but in vain, through every part of Italy. His poetic fervour became incessantly more and more heated by the idea which he had formed of his unknown admirer; and it is in some degree to *her* that his own times, the present times, and the latest posterity must feel themselves indebted for several of the most impassioned and charming compositions of the *Paradise Lost*."

Remarks on this palpable fiction would be superfluous. As a pendent to it we give the following day-dream, as it has justly been termed, of the amiable, the learned, the ingenious, but not profound, Sir William Jones :—

"The necessary trouble of correcting the first printed sheets of my history prevented me today from paying a proper respect to the memory of Shakspeare, by attending his jubilee. But I was resolved to do all the honour in my power to as great a poet; and set out in the morning in company with a friend to visit a place where Milton spent some part of his life, *and where, in all probability, he composed several of his earliest productions*. It is a small village on a pleasant hill, about three miles from Oxford, called Forest Hill, because it formerly lay contiguous to a forest, which has since been cut down. The poet chose this place of retirement after his first marriage, and he describes the beauties of his retreat in that fine passage of his *L'Allegro* :—

Sometime walking, not unseen,
By hedgerow clms, on hillocks green, etc.

"It was neither the proper season of the year, nor time of the day, to hear all the rural sounds, and see all the objects mentioned in this description; but, by a pleasing concurrence of circumstances, we were saluted, on our approach to the village, with the

musick of the mower and his scythe ; we saw the ploughman intent upon his labour, and the milkmaid returning from her country employment.

" As we ascended the hill, the variety of beautiful objects, the agreeable stillness and natural simplicity of the whole scene, gave us the highest pleasure. We at length reached the spot whence *Milton undoubtedly took most of his images*; it is on the top of the hill, from which there is a most extensive prospect on all sides : the distant mountains that seemed to support the clouds, the villages and turrets, partly shaded with trees of the finest verdure, and partly raised above the groves that surrounded them, the dark plains and meadows of a greyish colour, where the sheep were feeding at large ; in short, the view of the streams and rivers convinced us that there was not a single useless or idle word in the above-mentioned description, but that it was a most exact and lively representation of nature. Thus will this fine passage, which has always been admired for its elegance, receive an additional beauty from its exactness. After we had walked, with a kind of poetical enthusiasm, over this enchanted ground, we returned to the village.

" The poet's house was close to the church ; the greatest part of it has been pulled down ; and what remains belongs to an adjacent farm. I am informed that several papers in Milton's own hand were found by the gentleman who was last in possession of the estate. The tradition of his having lived there is current among the villagers : one of them showed us a ruinous wall that made part of his chamber, and I was much pleased with another who had forgotten the name of Milton, but recollect ed him by the title of The Poet.

" It must not be omitted, that the groves near this village are famous for nightingales, which are so elegantly described in the Pensero. Most of the cottage windows are overgrown with sweet-briars, vines, and honeysuckles ; and, that Milton's habitation had the same rustic ornament, we may conclude from his description of the lark bidding him good-morrow,

Through the sweet-briar or the vine
Or the twisted eglantine ;

for it is evident that he meant a sort of honeysuckle by the eglantine ; though that word is commonly used for the sweet-briar, which he could not mention twice in the same couplet.

"If ever I pass a month or six weeks at Oxford in the summer, I shall be inclined to hire and repair this venerable mansion, and to make a festival for a circle of friends, in honour of Milton, the most perfect scholar, as well as the sublimest poet, that our country ever produced. Such an honour will be less splendid, but more sincere and respectful, than all the pomp and ceremony on the banks of the Avon."

It would not be easy, we apprehend, to produce a stronger instance than this of the self-deception that an ingenious man can practise. Sir William Jones, we see, had persuaded himself that Milton had "composed several of his earliest productions" at Forest Hill, and of course he found proofs, and by leading questions he obtained such answers as he wished from some of the villagers. But any one who reads with any care our Life of Milton, will see not merely the improbability, but the impossibility of the whole theory. Milton never had a house at Forest Hill. Whenever he was there he must have resided at Mr. Powell's, and it is probable that he never made any stay there of any duration, except on the occasion of his marriage; and surely *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are not the kind of poems that a man would be likely to write during the honeymoon. Besides, from the time that Milton engaged in theologic controversy his mind had probably taken such a turn as would make such occupation seem to him at least unsuitable. But we should not waste our own time or that of the reader on what is so self-evidently apocryphal.

Todd gives the following anecdote from a book named Easton's Human Longevity, published at Salisbury in 1799, observing that the same had appeared in the Wolverhampton Chronicle of March 31, 1790, while Mr. Hartop was still living:—

"Of his unsubdued spirit," says Mr. Todd, "the following anecdote has been related. Soon after the Restoration he is said to have borrowed £50 of Jonathan Hartop, of Aldborough, near Boroughbridge, in Yorkshire, who died in 1791, at the great age of 138. He returned the loan with honour, though not without much difficulty, *as his circumstances were very low*. Mr. Hartop would have declined receiving it, but the pride of the poet was equal to his genius, and he sent the money with an angry letter, which was found among the curious possessions of that venerable old man."

We may observe that Mr. Todd expresses no doubt whatever of

the truth of this anecdote. Unfortunately for his critical acumen, chronology is as much against him here as topography was on a former occasion; for as Mr. Hartop died in 1791, aged 138 years, he must have been born in 1653, and so have been at most only ten years old when he made the loan to Milton.

Mr. Mitford, in the Addenda to his Life of Milton, quotes the following passage:—

“Mrs. Katharine Milton, wife to John Milton, Esq., was buried in St. Margaret’s Church in Westminster, Feb. 10, 1657. Reg. Book. Milton then lived in a new house in Petty France, when Mr. Harvey, son of Dr. Harvey, of Petty France, Westminster, told me, Nov. 14, 1770 (1670 ?) that old Mr. Lownde assured him that when Mr. Milton buried his wife he had the coffin shut down with twelve several locks that had twelve several keys, and that he gave the keys to twelve several friends, and desired the coffin might not be opened till they all met together. Kennett. *Wood’s Ath. Ox.* vol. ii. col. 486.” This is not very like Milton; and when and why was the coffin to be opened?

Richardson states that he was informed by Sir George Hungerford, an ancient Member of Parliament, that Sir John Denham came into the House one morning with a sheet of *Paradise Lost* wet from the press in his hand, and, being asked what it was, he replied, “Part of the noblest poem that ever was printed in any language or in any age.” He further tells us that it remained unknown till *two years* afterwards, when Lord Buckhurst, in company with a gentleman who often told the story to Richardson’s informant, looking over some books in Little Britain, met with *Paradise Lost*, and, being surprised with some passages in turning it over, bought it. The bookseller requested his Lordship to speak in its favour if he liked it, *for the books lay on his hands as waste paper*. Lord Buckhurst having read the poem, sent it to Dryden, who in a short time returned it with this answer—*This man cuts us all out, and the ancients too.* “Much the same character,” adds Richardson, “he gave of it to a north-country gentleman to whom I mentioned the book, he being a great reader, but not in a right train, coming to town seldom, and keeping little company. Dryden amazed him with speaking loftily of it. ‘Why, Mr. Dryden,’ says he (Sir W. L. told me the thing himself), ‘it is not in rime.’ ‘No,’ replied Dryden, ‘nor would I have done my Virgil in rime, if I was to begin it again.’”

On the first of these anecdotes Malone observes that there was

little probability of Denham's getting a proof-sheet; he might however if well known at the printing-office. He then observes that Denham was out of his mind the greater part of the year 1667, when the poem was at press; and finally, what is quite conclusive, that Denham never was in Parliament at all. With respect to the second, he notices the fact that within the first *two* years 1300 copies were sold.* We may add that Dryden was probably acquainted with Milton at the time, and at all events he must have known that he had written *Comus*, which was so far beyond anything that he himself or any of his contemporaries had written. The last anecdote is probably true.

NOTE I.

MILTON'S WILL AND PROCEEDINGS THEREON.†

"Memorandum, that JOHN MILTON, late of the parish of St. Giles Cripplegate in the Countie of Middlesex Gentleman, deceased, at severall times before his death, and in particular on or about the twentieth day of July, in the year of our Lord God 1674, being of perfect mind and memorie, declared his Will and intent as to the disposall of his estate after his death, in these words following, or of like effect: *The portion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her, having received no parte of it: but my meaning is, they shall have no other benefit of my estate than the said portion, and what I have besides done for them; they having been very undutifull to me. All the residue of my estate I leave to [the] disposall of Elizabeth my loving wife.* Which words, or to the same effect, were spoken in the presence of CHRISTOPHER MILTON.

"X [Mark of] ELIZABETH FISHER.

"Nov. 23. 1674."

I.

The Allegation propounding the Will, on which Allegation the Witnesses be examined.

"Negotium Testamentarium, sive probacionis Testamenti nuncupativi, sive ultimae Voluntatis, JOHANNIS MILTON, nuper dum

* As the poem was first published by Peter Parker under Creed Church, near Aldgate, and Robert Boulter in Fleet-street, the Little Britain bookseller could have only had some of the copies he had bought at the sale, which might be lying on his hands. Symmons gives credit to the anecdote.

† First published by Warton in his edition of Milton's Minor Poems.

vixit parochiæ S. Ægidii *Cripplegate* London generosi, defuncti, habent. etc. promotum per Elizabetham MILTON Relictam, et Legatariam principalem nominatam in Testamento nuncupativo, sive ultima Voluntate, dicti defuncti, contra Mariam, Annam, et Deboraham MILTON, filias dicti defuncti.

“ THOMPSON. CLEMENTS.

“ Secundo Andreæ, A. D. 1674. Quo die . . . Thompson, nomine, procuratione, ac ultimus procurator legitimus, dictæ Elizabethæ MILTON, omnibus melioribus et effectualioribus [efficacioribus] via, modo, et meliori forma, necnon ad ommem juris effectum, exhibuit Testamentum nuncupativum dicti JOHANNIS MILTON defuncti, sic incipiens, ‘ MEMORANDUM, that JOHN MILTON, late of the parish of S. Giles, Cripplegate,’ etc. Which words, or words to the same effect, were spoken in the presence of Christopher MILTON, and Elizabeth Fisher; et allegavit consimiliter, et dicens prout sequitur. I. Quod præfatus JOHANNES MILTON, dum vixit, mentis compos, ac in sua sana memoria existens, . . . Testamentum suum nuncupativum modo in hoc negotio exhibi-
tum . . . tenoris schedulæ . . . testamentariae condidit, nuncupavit, et declaraçavit; cæteraque omnia et singula dedit, donavit, reliquit, et disposuit, in omnibus, et per omnia, vel similiter in effectum, prout in dicto Testamento nuncupativo continetur, ac postea mortem obiit: ac Principalis Pars ista proponit conjunctim, divisim, et de quolibet. II. Item, quod tempore conditionis, declarationis, nuncupationis Testamenti, in hoc negotio exhibiti, præfatus JOHANNES MILTON perfecta fruebatur memoria; ac proponit ut supra.”

II.

Interrogatories addressed to the Witnesses examined upon the Allegation.

“ Decemb. 5. 1674. Interrogatoria ministrata et ministranda ex parte Annæ, Mariæ, et Deborahæ MILTON, testibus ex parte Elizabethæ MILTON productis sive producendis sequuntur.

“ *Imprimis*, Aske each witnesse, what relation to, or dependence on, the produceant, they, or either of them, have; and to which of the parties they would give the victory were it in their power? Et interrogatur quilibet testis conjunctim, et divisim, et de quolibet.

“ 2. *Item*, Aske each witnesse, what day, and what time of the

day, the Will nuncupative was declared ; what positive words did the deceased use in the declaring thereof ? Can you positively swear, that the deceased did declare that hee did leave the residue of his estate to the disposall of his wife, or did hee not say, ‘*I will leave the residue of my estate to my wife*’? *Et fiat ut supra.*

“3. *Item*, Upon what occasion did the deceased declare the said Will ? Was not the deceased in perfect health at the same time ? Doe you not think, that the deceased, if he declared any such Will, declared it in a present passion, or some angry humour against some or one of his children by his former [first] wife ? *Et fiat ut supra.*

“4. *Item*, Aske each witnesse, whether the parties ministrant were not and are not greate frequenters of the Church, and good livers;* and what cause of displeasure had deceased against them ? *Et fiat ut supra.*

“5. *Item*, Aske Mr. [Christopher] MILTON, and each other witnesse, whether the deceased’s Will, if any such was made, was not, that the deceased’s wife should have £1000, and the children of the said Christopher MILTON the residue ; and whether she hath not promised him that they should have it, if shee prevailed in this Cause ? Whether the said Mr. MILTON hath not since the deceased’s death confessed soe much, or some part thereof ? *Et fiat ut supra.*

“6. *Item*, Aske each witnesse, whether what is left to the ministrants by the said Will is not reputed a very bad or altogether desperate debt ? *Et fiat ut supra.*

“7. Aske the said Mr. MILTON, whether he did not gett the said Will drawn upp, and inform the writer to what effect he should draw it ? And did he not enquire of the other witnesses, what they would or could depose ? And whether he hath not solicited this Cause, and pay’d fees to the Proctour about it ? *Et fiat ut supra.*

“8. *Item*, Aske each witnesse, what fortune the deceased did in his lifetime bestowe on the ministrants ? And whether the said Anne MILTON is not lame, and almost helplesse ? *Et fiat ut supra.*

* The description *good livers* is not to be understood in its general and proper sense, which could not have offended Milton ; but as arising from what went before, and meaning much the same thing, that is, *regular in their attendance on the established worship*.—WABTON.

"9. *Item, Aske each witnesse, what value is the deceased's estate of, as neare as they can guess? Et fiat ut supra.*"

III.

Depositions and Cross-Examinations of the said Witnesses.

"Elizabetha MILTON, Relieta et Legataria principalis JOHANNIS MILTON defuneti, contra Annam, Mariam, et Deboram MILTON, filias ejusdem defuneti. Super Allegatione articulata et Testamento nuncupativo JOHANNIS MILTON defuncti, ex parte Elizabethae MILTON predictæ, in hoc negotio, secundo Andreæ, 1674, dato et exhibitis.

"Quinto Decembris 1674. Christopherus MILTON villa Gipwici in com. Suffolciae, ortus infra parochiam Omnium Sanctorum *Bredstreete*, London, ætat. 58 annor. aut eo circiter, testis, etc. Ad omnes articulos dictæ Allegationis, et ad Testamentum nuncupativum JOHANNIS MILTON, generosi, defuncti, in hoc negotio dat. et exhibit. deponit et dicit, That on or about the twentieth day of July, 1674, the day certaine he now remembreth not, this deponent being a practicer in the Law, and a Bencher in the Inner Temple, but living in vacations at Ipswich, did usually at the ende of the Terme visit JOHN MILTON, his this deponent's brother the Testator articulate, deceased, before his going home; and soe at the end of Midsummer Terme last past, he this deponent went to visit his said brother, and then found him in his chamber within his owne house, situate on Bunhill, within the parish of S. Giles, Crepelgate, London: And at that tyme, he the said Testator, being not well, (and this deponent being then going into the country,) in a serious manner, with an intent, (as he believes,) that what he then spoke should be his WILL, if he dyed before his this deponent's coming the next time to London, declared his Will in these very words as neare as this deponent cann now call to mynd, viz. *Brother, the porcion due to me from Mr. Powell, my former [first] wife's father, I leave to the unkind children I had by her: but I have receaved noe part of it, and my Will and meaning is, they shall have noe other benefit of my estate, than the said porcion and what I have besides don for them: they haveing been very undutiful to me. And all the residue of my estate I leave to the disposall of Elizabeth my loving wife.* She, the said Elizabeth his the deceased's wife, and Elizabeth Fysher his the deceased's then maide-servant, was [at the] same tyme goeing upp

and downe the roome, but whether she then heard the said deceased so declare his Will as above or not, he knoweth not.

“ And the said testator at the premises was of perfect mind and memory, and talked and discoursed sensibly and well, *et aliter nescit deponere.*

“ CHR. MILTON.

“ AD INTERROGATORIA.

“ Ad 1^m Interr. *respondet*, that the party producent in this cause was and is the relict of the said deceased, who was his this respondent's brother ; and the parties ministering these interrogatories were, and are in repute, and soe he beleeveth, his the said deceased's children by a former wife : and for his part, he wisheth right to take place, and soe would give it if in his power ; and likewise wisheth that his brother's Will might take effect.

“ Ad 2^m Interr. *respondet*, that on what day of the moneth or weeke the said deceased declared his Will, as is above depos'd, he now remembreth not precisely ; but well remembreth, that it was in a forenoone, and on the very day he this deponent was goeing in the country in [the] Ipswich coach, which goeth not out of towne till noone or thereabout ; and he veryly beleeveth in his conscience, that the residue of his estate he did then dispose of in these very words, viz. *And all the residue of my estate I leave to the disposall of Elizabeth my loving wife* ; or he used words to the selfe-same effect, *et aliter referendo se ad pre-depos. nescit respondere.*

“ Ad 3^m Interr. *respondet*, that the said deceased was then ill of the goute, and what he then spake touching his Will was in a very calme manner ; only [he] complained, but without passion, that his children had been unkind to him, but that his wife had been very kind and careful of him ; and he believeth the only reason induced the said deceased at that time to declare his Will was, that he this deponent might know it before his goeing into the country, *et aliter referendo se ad pre-deposita nescit respondere.*

“ Ad 4^m Interr. *respondet*, that he knoweth not how the parties ministering these interrogatories frequent the church, or in what manner of behaviour of life and conversation they are of, they living apart from their father four or five yeares last past, and as touching his the deceased's displeasure with them, he only heard

him say at the tyme of declareing of his Will, that they were undutifull and unkind to him, not expressing any particulars ; but in former tymes he hath herd him complaine, that they were careless of him being blind, and made nothing of deserteing him, *et aliter nescit respondere*.

“ Ad 5^m Interr. *respondet*, that since this respondent's coming to London this Michaelmas Terme last paste, this respondent's sister, the party now producent in this cause, told this respondent, that the deceased his brother did after his this respondent's going into the country in Trinity vacacion last summer [say,] that, if she should have any overplus above a £1000 come to her hands of his the deceased's estate, she should give the same to this respondent's children : but the deceased himselfe did not declare any such thing to this respondent at the tyme of his declaring his Will, the tyme above deposed of.

“ Ad 6^m Interr. *respondet*, that he beleeveth that what is left to the parties ministring these interrogatories by the said deceased's Will, is in the hands of persons of ability abell to pay the same, being their grandmother and uncle ; and he hath seen the grandfather's Will wherein 'tis particularly directed to be paid unto them by his executors, *et aliter nescit respondere*.

“ Ad 7^m Interr. *respondet*, that he this respondent did draw upp the very Will executed in this cause, and write it with his owne hand, when he came to this court, about the 23rd of November last past, and at that tyme this respondent did read the same all over to Elizabeth Fisher, the said deceased's late maid servant, and she said she remembered the same, and in confirmation whereof set her marke thereto in manner as on the same Will executed in this cause is now to be seen. And this respondent waited on the said deceased's widdow once at Doctor Exton's chambers about this suite, at which tyme she wanted some halfe crownes, and this respondent lent her then two halfe crownes, but more he hath at noe tyme paid either to Doctor or Proctor in this cause.

“ Ad 8^m Interr. *respondet*, that he knoweth of noe fortune given by the said deceased to the parties ministring these interrogatories, besides the portion which he was promised with his former wife in marriage, being a £1000 which is still unpaid besides the interest thereof for about twenty yeares, saveing his charges in their maintenance and breeding, *et aliter nescit respondere*, saveing that Anne Milton interr. is lame and helpless.

“ Ad ult. reddit causas scientiæ suæ ut supra.

“ Die prid. repetit. cor. Doctore Lloyd, Surrog.

“ CHR. MILTON.

“ Milton con. Thompson,
“ Milton et Milton, Clements. { Sup. All^{mis} artic. et Testamento
nuncupativo Johan. Milton de-
functi ex parte Elizabethæ
Milton in hujusmodi Causa dat
et admiss. examinat.

“ 15° Dec. 1674.

“ Maria Fisher, soluta famul. domestica Johan. Batten habitan. in vico vocat. Bricklane in Old Streete ubi moram fecit per spacium sex hebdomadarum aut eo circiter, antea cum Benjamino Whitecomb Mercatore habitan. in vico vocat. Coleman Streete London per spacium 3m. mensium, antea cum Guiddon Culcap infra locum vocat. Smock Alley prope Spittlefields per spacium unius anni, aut eo circiter, antea cum Johanne Bayley infra Oppidum Milton in Com. Stafford per spacium duorum annorum, ante eum Johanne Baddily infra parochiam de Milton præd. per spacium trium annorum, et antea cum quodam Rogers Hargrave infra parochiam de Milton præd. per spacium duorum annorum aut eo circiter, orta infra parochiam de Norton in Com. Stafford præd. ætatis 23 aut eo circiter, testis, etc.

“ Ad omnes articulos dictæ All^{mis} et ad testamentum nuncupati-
vum Johan. Milton testatoris in hac causa defuncti in hujusmodi
neg^o dat. et exhibit. *deponit* et *dicit*, that this deponent knew and
was well acquainted with the articulate John Milton, the testator
in this cause deceased, for about a twelve moneth before his death,
who dyed about a moneth since to the best of this deponent's re-
membrance; And saith, that on a day hapning about two moneths
since, as neare as this deponent can remember, this deponent being
then in the kitchen of the house of the aforesaid John Milton, sci-
tuate against the Artillery Ground neare Bunhill Fields, and about
noone of the same day, the said deceased and the producent Eliza-
beth his wife being then at dinner in the said kitchen, hee the said
deceased amongst other discourse then had betweene him and his
said wife, did then speake to his said wife and utter these words,
viz. *Make much of mee as long as I live, for thou knowest I have*

given thee all when I dye at thy disposal; there being then present in the said kitchen this deponent's sister and *contest*, namely Elizabeth Fysher. And the said deceased was at that time of perfect mind and memory, and talked and discoursed sensibly and well, and was very merry, and seemed to be in good health of body, *et aliter nescit.*

“Signum MARIE FISHER.

“AD INTERROGATORIA.

“Ad primum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent hath noe relation or dependance on the producent Elizabeth Milton, that it is indifferent to this respondent which of the parties in this suite obtaine, and would give the victory in this cause if in her power to that party that hath most right; but which party hath most right thereto this respondent knoweth not, *et aliter nescit.*

“Ad secundum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent doth not remember the day when the deceased declared the words by her pre-deposed, but remembreth that it was about noone of such day that the words which hee then declared were these, viz. *Make much of mee as long as I live, for thou knowest I have given thee all when I dye at thy disposall;* then speaking to his wife Elizabeth Milton the party producent in this cause, *et aliter nescit.*

“Ad tertium Interr. *respondet*, that the deceased, when hee declared the words pre-deposed, was then at dinner with his wife the party producent, and was then very merry, and seemed to be in good health of body; but upon what occasion hee spoke the said words shee knoweth not, *et aliter nescit.*

“Ad quartum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent knoweth neither of the parties ministrant in this cause, saving this respondent once saw Anne Milton, one of the ministrants, *et nescit respondere pro parte sua.*

“Ad quintum Interr. *nescit respondere.*

“Ad sextum Interr. *nescit respondere.*

“Ad septimum Interr. *non concernit eam, et nescit respondere.*

“Ad octavum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent once saw the Interr. Anne Milton, but doth not remember whether shee was lame or helplesse, *et aliter nescit.*

“Ad 9^m Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent knoweth nothing of the deceased's estate or the value thereof, *et aliter nescit.*

“Eodem die repetit. coram Doctore Digby, Surro. etc., pñte
Tho. Welham, N.P.

“Signum MARIE FISHER.

“Eodem Die

Elizabetha Fisher, famula domestica Elizabethæ Milton pñtis producentis in hac causa cum qua et Johanne Milton ejus marito defuncto vixit per spacium 13 mensium, antea cum quodam Thoma Adams apud Bagnall in Com. Stafford per spacium trium annorum et sex mensium, antea cum W^{mo} Bourne Gen. infra parochiam de Woolstilstan in Com. Stafford præd. per spacium duorum annorum, orta infra parochiam de Norton in Com. præd. ætatis 28 annorum aut eo circiter, testis, etc.

“Ad omnes articulos dictæ All^{nis} et ad testamentum nuncupativum Johan. Milton testatoris in hac causa defuncti in hujusmodi negotio dat. exhibit. et admiss. *deponet* et *dicit*, that this deponent was servant unto Mr. JOHN MILTON the testator in this cause deceased for about a yeare before his death, who died upon a Sunday the fifteenth of November last at night, And saith that on a day hapning in the month of July last, the time more certainly she remembereth not, this deponent being then in the deceased's lodging chamber, hee the said deceased, and the party producent in this cause his wife, being then alsoe in the said chamber at dinner together, and the said Elizabeth Milton the party producent having provided something for the deceased's dinner which hee very well liked, hee the said deceased then spoke to his said wife these or the like words, as neare as this deponent can remember, viz. *God have mercy, Betty, I see thou wilt performe according to thy promise in providing mee such dishes as I think fitt whilst I live, and when I dye thou knowest that I have left thee all*, there being noebody present in the said chamber with the said deceased and his wife but this deponent: And the said testator at that time was of perfect mind and memory, and talked and discoursed sensibly and well, but was then indisposed in his body by reason of the distemper of the gout, which hee had then upon him. Further this deponent saith, that shee hath sevrall times heard the said deceased, since the time above deposed of, declare and say, that hee had made provision for his children in his lifetime, and had spent the greatest part of his estate in providing for them,

and that hee was resolved hee would doe noe more for them living or dyeing, for that little part which hee had left hee had given to his wife the articulate Elizabeth the producent, or he used words to that effect. And likewise told this deponent, that there was a thousand pounds left in Mr. Powell's hands to be disposed amongst his children hereafter. By all which words this respondent verily beleeveth that the said testator had given all his estate to the articulate Elizabeth his wife, and that shee should have the same after his decease, *et aliter nescit respondere*, saving that the said deceased was at the several times of declaring the words last pre-depos'd alsoe of perfect mind and memory.

"Signum ELIZAB. FISHER.

"AD INTERROGATORIA.

"Ad primum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent was servant to the deceased in his lifetime and is now servant to the producent, and therefore hath a dependency upon her as her servant, that if the victory were in this respondent's power shee would give the deceased's estate equally to be shared betweene the ministrants and the producent, *et aliter nescit*.

"Ad secundum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent doth not remenber on what day the deceased declared the words first by her afore depos'd, but it was about noone of such day when he was at dinner that the precise words, as neare as this respondent can remember, which the deceased used at that time, were these, viz. *God have mercy, Betty*, (speaking to his wife Elizabeth Milton, for soe hee usually called her,) *I see thou wilt performe according to thy promise in providing mee such dishes as I think fitt whilst I live, and when I dye thou knowest that I have left thee all*; et aliter nescit, saving that this respondent well remembreth that the deceased declared the words last by her depos'd to the articles of the allegation to this respondent once on a Sunday in the afternoone, but on what day of the month or in what month the said Sunday then happened this respondent doth not remember.

"Ad tertium Interr. *respondet*, that the occasion of the deceased's speaking of the words depos'd by this respondent in her answer to the next precedent interrogatory was upon the producent's provideing the deceased such victuals for his dinner as hee liked, and that he was then indifferent well in health, saving that some time he was troubled with the paine of the gout, and

that hee was at that time very merry and not in any passion or angry humour, neither at that time spoke anything against any of his children that this respondent heard of, *et aliter nescit*.

“ Ad quartum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent hath heard the deceased declare his displeasure against the parties ministrant his children, and particularly the deceased declared to this respondent that, a little before hee was marryed to Elizabeth Milton his now relict, a former maid-servant of his told Mary, one of the deceased’s daughters and one of the ministrants, that shee heard the deceased was to be marryed, to which the said Mary replyed to the said maid-servant, that that was noe news to heare of his weddung, but if shee could heare of his death that was something: and further told this respondent, that all his said children did combine together and counsel his maid-servant to cheat him the deceased in her markettings, and that his said children had made away some of his bookees and would have sold the rest of his bookees to the dunghill women; or hee the said deceased spoke words to this respondent to the selfe-same effect and purpose: that this respondent knoweth not what frequenteres of the church, or what good livers, the parties ministrant or either of them are, *et aliter nescit*.

“ Ad quintum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent doth not know that the deceased’s wife was to have £1000 and the interrogative children of Christopher Milton the residue, nor doth this respondent know that the said Elizabeth, the deceased’s wife, hath promised the interrogative Christopher Milton or his children any such thing in case shee should prevaile in this cause; that the said Mrs. Milton never confessed soe much in this respondent’s hearing, or to anybody else that this respondent knoweth of, *et aliter nescit*.

“ Ad sextum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent believeth that what is left the deceased’s children in the Will nuncupative in this cause executed and mencioned therein to be due from Mr. Powell, is a good debt; for that the said Mr. Powell is reputed a rich man, *et aliter nescit*.

“ Ad septimum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent did voluntarilly tell the interrogative Mrs. Milton, what shee heard the deceased say, which was to the effect by her pre-deposed, *et aliter nescit*.

“ Ad octavum Interr. *respondet*, that this respondent knoweth

not what the deceased did in his lifetime bestow on the ministrants his children, and that the interrogative Anne Milton is lame, but hath a trade and can live by the same, which is the making of gold and silver lace, and which the deceased bred her up to, *et aliter nescit.*

“Ad nonum Interr. *respondeat*, that this respondent knoweth not the deceased's estate, or the value thereof, *et aliter nescit.*

“Eodem die repetit. coram Doctore *Trumbull*, Surrog. etc.
Tho. Welham, N.P.

“Signum ELIZABETHÆ FISHER.”

PART II.
OPINIONS OF MILTON.

OPINIONS OF MILTON.



ON RELIGION.

IN what precedes we have given such particulars of the life of Milton as have been transmitted to our times. His opinions on religion, polities, and other important subjects are now to claim our attention; and it surely must be a matter of the utmost interest to ascertain what a man so eminently endowed, and so free from the restraints of authority and custom in his sentiments, thought on matters which men have agreed in regarding as those of the deepest importance.

We commence naturally with the subject of Religion, the speculative portion of which so much occupied the minds of men in the centuries immediately subsequent to the Reformation. And here we have a most valuable aid in the work on Christian Doctrine, of which we have already spoken,* and which was unknown till the present century. This is in every respect a most valuable and important work, without a parallel perhaps at its time,—exhibiting the efforts of a powerful mind to arrive at truth, disregarding authority, and guided only by the rules of logic and criticism, as far as they were known

* See above, p. 111.

and followed at the time. It also shows the force of early prejudices, and how utterly impossible it is for even the most powerful mind totally to emancipate itself from their influence; for we shall find Milton, while fancying he is following Scripture alone, maintaining opinions which were the mere inventions of the Fathers.

It is a question if it was possible, in the time of Milton, to arrive at the knowledge of the exact sense of the language of Scripture; and we are of opinion that it was not. The following are, we apprehend, the requisites for the Scriptural critic, and we will apply them to the case of Milton.

1. The first and most absolutely necessary is the sincere love of truth for its own sake, independent of the worldly advantages which may be connected with it. Nothing is more rare than this; but probably no man could lay claim to it with more justice than Milton.

2. The next is moral courage, that will set at naught the *argumentum ad verecundiam*; and refuse unconditional submission to the authority of Councils, Fathers, and theologians, as well knowing that infallibility belongs not to man either individually or collectively; that it is only in matters of fact that authority, when free from suspicion, is to be received; and that in matters of opinion every one is bound to produce his reasons and submit them to examination. Here too Milton will not be found wanting.

3. The third requisite is what is termed the critical sense,—that power of discerning, by a delicate application of the principles of logic and grammar, what is genuine and what is not so in a work,—what is the exact meaning of a word, a phrase, or a passage. This, which in some cases is termed *tact*, was defective not only

in Milton, but in all the scholars of his time and of the preceding century ; for though, like every other mental power, it is the gift of Nature, yet there is none which has more need of example and exercise for its perfection. It would surely have amazed the contemporaries of Milton to have been told that many of the letters and speeches of Cicero are not the composition of that great orator ; yet what critic since the time of Tunstall, who first discerned a portion of the truth, has had any doubt on the subject ? And even Tunstall himself might wonder at finding his own principles applied, successfully we think, even to three of the orations against Catilina.* In that time also no one had any suspicion that the Ilias was not one organic piece, the product of one mind, as much as the Æneis or the Paradise Lost ; while now the ablest critics are agreed to regard it as the work of more minds than one. Again, no one will say that the scholars of the present day are more, or even as familiar with the Classics as were those of Milton's time, and yet it is not presumption to assert that they understand them more completely ;† for knowledge of this kind, like that in natural science, is progressive, and the students of the coming centuries may elucidate passages which we deceive ourselves in fancying that we understand perfectly. All that has been said here applies with still greater force to the interpretation of Scripture, on which in the time of Milton the critical sense had only ventured to exercise itself with timidity.

4. To these internal qualities, in order to form the perfect Biblical critic, must be added what we may term the

* See our note on Sall. Cat. lii. 1.

† Thus there are errors, as we shall show, in Milton's own translation of Horace's Ode to Pyrrha.

external one,—of an extensive and accurate acquaintance with not merely the Greek and Hebrew languages, but with the Arabic and the other kindred dialects of the latter. To this must be added a knowledge of the manners, and the modes of thought, feeling, and expression of the Orientals, and of the geology, geography, natural history, etc. of the East. It is needless to say how deficient Milton's age was in all these branches of knowledge.

In reading the theologic work of Milton we are therefore to expect to meet with error, such being the inevitable consequence of the circumstances under which he composed it.

The progress of Milton's mind in theology was of course, like that of the mind of every independent thinker, gradual. He was, as we have seen, brought up in Puritanism, but certainly not in ‘the most straitest sect,’ or else even in his seventeenth year his muse would not, though it were in obedience to orders, have poured forth elegiac strains on the death of the anti-puritanic Bishop Andrews, or have, some time later, sung the apotheosis of the wife of the Catholic Marquess of Winchester. In the poems which he wrote on the birth and death of our Lord we meet with nothing particular, except one place, where the young poet appears, unconsciously no doubt, as a Tritheist. During the happy period at Horton he probably did not give overmuch of his time and thoughts to knotty points of theology; but on his return from the Continent he plunged at once into the religious controversies of the age. We cannot however discover any change in his theology.

Thus in the splendid peroration of his treatise Of Reformation in England,—which we shall give at length in

the next division of our work,—he expresses the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity, “One Tripersonal Godhead,” and in more than one place of that treatise he speaks of Arianism as a heresy. In the Animadversions, etc. he addresses the Son as “the ever-begotten Light and perfect Image of the Father,” terms corresponding with those of the Nicene Creed.*

He also had no objection to infant baptism, for in The Reason of Church Government (book ii. chap. 2) he says :—

Ye have been told, not to set your threshold by his threshold, or your posts by his posts; but your sacrament, your sign, call it what you will, by his sacrament, baptizing the Christian infant with a solemn sprinkle, and unbaptizing for your own part, with a profane and impious forefinger; as if, when ye had laid the purifying element upon his forehead, ye meant to cancel and cross it out again with a character not of God’s blessing.

In the Doctrine of Divorce (i. 14) he speaks of those “who follow *Anabaptism*, Familism, Antinomianism, and other fanatic dreams.”

He also at this time held the Calvinistic doctrine of Predestination, but in the Sublapsarian form ; for he thus writes in that treatise (ii. ch. 3) :—

The Jesuits, and that sect among us which is named of Arminius, are wont to charge us of making God the author of sin, in two degrees especially, not to speak of his permission : 1. Because we hold that He hath decreed some to damnation (and consequently to sin, say they); next, because those means, which are of saving knowledge to others, He makes to them an occasion of greater sin. Yet considering the perfection wherein man was created, and

* The following passage occurs in his Ready and Easy Method, etc., printed early in 1660 : “Which Thou suffer not, who didst create mankind free! nor Thou next, who didst redeem us from being servants of men!”—Compare Par. Lost, iii. 372 and 383. This looks like a change of opinion.

might have stood,—no decree necessitating his freewill, but subsequent, though not in time, yet in order, to causes which were in his own power,—they might methinks be persuaded to absolve both God and us.

These are the religious opinions which he seems to have held up to at least the thirty-seventh year of his age; and we have hardly any further indications of his theologic sentiments for more than twenty years, when *Paradise Lost* was given to the world. In this poem the Arian doctrine respecting the Son was expressed in so plain and unequivocal a manner, that were it not for the cause which we shall hereafter assign, one might wonder that every reader did not discern it. He would also seem to have given up the doctrine of infant baptism; for when speaking of the charge given to the Apostles to teach all nations, he adds:—

Them who shall believe
Baptizing in the *profluent stream*, the sign
Of washing them from guilt of sin to life
Pure and in mind prepared, if so befall,
For death like that which the Redeemer died;—xii. 441.

which words will properly apply only to grown persons, and we shall presently see were meant only to apply to such persons. With respect to predestination, any one who reads the language respecting it which the poet has ventured to put into the mouth of the Almighty (iii. 98 seq.) will be inclined to suspect that his opinions on that subject also had undergone some alteration. Finally, in his short treatise *Of true Religion, Heresy, etc.*, published in 1673, we meet with that fine passage which we shall give below, on toleration, which breathes the full spirit of Christian charity, suitable to the nature of so great a poet and so heavenly-minded a man as Milton.

Such then was the knowledge of Milton's theologic

sentiments which the world possessed till the end of the first quarter of the present century, when the Latin manuscript of the treatise on Christian Doctrine which had been discovered in the State Paper Office was printed, with an excellent translation by Dr. Sumner, now Bishop of Winchester.* This, as already observed, is in every respect a most remarkable work, as exhibiting the unbiassed—as far as was possible at the time—opinions of a man of the highest mental powers. From Scripture alone he deduces his proofs; and while the theologic works of the age are overlaid with quotations from Greek and Latin writers, disfiguring the text or covering the margin, here we find a perfect freedom from such dependence and bondage. It were indeed to be desired, but it was hardly attainable at the time, that the mind of the writer had been less enthralled to the mere letter of Scripture, and, though he never actually asserts it, to the theory of Plenary Inspiration; for he then might have escaped some of the errors into which he has fallen, all of which may be traced to this source.

It is a remarkable fact that the writers of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries seem to have taken for granted the divine origin of the Scriptures and their plenary inspiration. Thus the divines who had the task of compiling the Articles of the Church of England never even mention the inspiration of Scripture; in consequence of which omission (for such it surely was) the clergy, not merely the laity, of that Church are at perfect liberty to form what opinions they may please on the subject, and to determine on critical grounds what parts of Scripture are genuine and what are suspicious. This is the more

* Our subsequent quotations shall be from this translation in the quarto edition. The italics in them are in general our own.

to be wondered at, as they must have been well aware that Luther and Zwinglè had both rejected the Apocalypse, and that Luther also had at least strong doubts as to the genuineness of the Epistles of James and Jude, and Calvin as to that of the Second of Peter.

In like manner neither here nor elsewhere do we find anything of moment on what are now called the Evidences of Christianity; all was taken for granted. Even the treatise of Grotius appears to have been intended for the convincing of Mohammedans and heathens, as those born where the Gospel was preached were thought to require no proofs of what was held to be as certain as the demonstrations of mathematics. This is however no longer the case. The evidence of Christianity is now recognized as being only moral evidence, and therefore subject to all the doubt and uncertainty belonging to evidence of that nature. It is therefore to be hoped that the following observations may not prove unacceptable to persons of a serious cast of thought. They are intended to supply the deficiency of Milton's theologic work.

It is surprising how few persons are able to give any valid ‘reason for the hope that is in them.’ Most believe because their fathers before them believed. To some, such as Luther and Johnson, the main argument is the accomplishment of prophecy; and yet—it is strange how it could have escaped the acute intellect of Johnson—this is actually no argument at all, at least not a primary one; for before we can assert that an event was foretold, we must prove that it happened, which in this case is the *quod erat demonstrandum*; if the truth of the Gospel history is proved, we have all that was required. Many of the other arguments are not much stronger than this; even that on which Paley rests almost exclusively is by

no means unanswerable, and we find at length that nothing can be firmly relied on but the miracles, or rather the *one* great miracle, the Resurrection ; and the inquiry must be, what proof there is of the truth of that stupendous event.

Have we the testimony of any sensible, honest eye-witness ? It is very doubtful whether we have or not. Two of the Gospels, it is true, are ascribed by the tradition of the Church to two of the apostles ; but we meet with this tradition first in Irenæus, a writer who did not flourish till the end of the second century, and whose critical acumen was by no means great. It seems moreover almost morally impossible that the two narratives could have both been written by eye-witnesses, and we have nothing but the aforesaid tradition in support of the assertion of either being the work of an apostle. In this uncertainty, whither then are we to have recourse ? Here Providence has preserved us an evidence which, to our mind at least, is invincible,—that afforded by the Epistles of the Apostle Paul.

In the whole compass of literature there is no work of which the genuineness is more certain than of these epistles, at least the first four, of which alone we will speak at present, and against which even the wildest scepticism has been unable to raise any doubt. They stand on precisely the same ground as those of Cicero, *i. e.* they have all the internal marks of authenticity, and their genuineness has never been disputed or even suspected. What we would say then to any honest inquirer after the truth is this : Read the two Epistles to the Corinthians carefully ; mark the clearness and cogency of reasoning, the sound good sense and good feeling, the noble disinterestedness, which appear in every line of them ; and

when you have done so, if you can lay your hand on your heart and say with truth and sincerity that you can suspect the writer to have been a dupe or an impostor, deceived himself or desirous of deceiving others, we will confess that we have no further arguments to offer, and that we abandon all hopes of ever convincing you. It seems to us however almost impossible that such should be the case with any sincere inquirer after the truth.

In the first of these epistles—written to those who could contradict and expose him if he asserted anything that he could not prove, and who would have been but too glad to do so—he asserts in the strongest terms that he himself had seen Jesus Christ after he had been put to death; and he mentions several other persons who to his knowledge, or at least the best of his belief, had also seen him. He further affirms that he had received the power of performing miracles. The second epistle proves that his assertions had not been, or could not be, contradicted. We thus have what we were in search of—the testimony of one whom we may almost regard as an eyewitness to the truth of the Resurrection. In confirmation of this evidence of St. Paul we may add the last thirteen chapters of the Acts of the Apostles, which have evidently been taken from the diary or journal of one of Paul's companions,—in all probability Timothy,*—and

* This theory, and no other, will account for the omission in the Acts of the toils and dangers undergone by St. Paul, and mentioned by himself, 2 Cor. xi. 23 seq. They had occurred in the first years of his labours, and before he had met with Timothy. It may also account for the abrupt termination of the Acts; for, as the tradition is probably correct that St. Paul perished in the Neronian persecution, it would appear that he wrote his Epistle to the Philippians, in which he mentions his intention of sending Timothy to them, a little before that event, and Timothy therefore ended his journal when he left Rome. The writer of the Acts then finding no more documents, stopped at that point.

which bear ample testimony to his power of performing miracles. Finally, the character of Jesus Christ, as portrayed in the Gospels, especially in that of Matthew, is so simple, so beautiful, so elevated, so divine, that we can hardly conceive how any one can doubt of its truth and reality. Then as to the Old Testament—when we read the writings of the Prophets, and observe the pure and stainless and exalted morality which they contain, so far beyond anything that Greece or India can display, a feeling is generated that they must have had an instruction to which the sages of those countries could lay no claim. This evidence we regard as sufficient, though at the same time we acknowledge that it is accompanied by many difficulties of no small magnitude, for greater would not accord with our free-will. Had, for example, the evidence been like that of mathematics, where would be the merit of faith? In moral matters moral evidence alone can be given, and such is rarely free from doubt and difficulty. We may now see that Christianity stands on its own foundation, and is entirely independent of the Old Testament, and therefore unaffected by the attacks of sceptics on the narratives which it contains. In fact, even if it were proved to be no more authentic than the mythology and tradition of other ancient nations, the evidences of Christianity would not be thereby weakened in the slightest degree. Let then the advocate for Christianity make the argument from St. Paul's Epistles his Torres Vedras, as it were, and he may safely abandon the open country of the Old Testament to the enemy, though it be but for a time.*

* Thus, for instance, the truth of Christianity cannot be affected by the discoveries of geology. By the way, we could wish that geologists would recollect the precept of *ne sutur ultra crepidam*; for they often make sad work of the interpretation of Scripture.

Having thus endeavoured to supply an important omission in Milton's treatise, we will now proceed to give some account of the contents of that very remarkable work.

It is divided into two Books: the first, Of the Knowledge of God, in thirty-three chapters; the second, Of the Service of God, in seventeen chapters: the former being a body of theology, the latter a system of Christian ethics. It commences in the following manner, in imitation of the Apostolic Epistles; for we must ever bear in mind, in reading the later works of Milton on theologic subjects, that, as we shall presently show, he held himself to be under the guidance of the divine spirit of Truth.

JOHN MILTON to all the Churches of Christ, and to all who profess the Christian faith throughout the world, peace and the recognition of the truth and eternal salvation in God the Father and in our Lord, Jesus Christ.

The first point which he discusses is the being, nature, and character of God. He gives various proofs of his existence: a thing perhaps hardly needful, for it would not, we apprehend, be very difficult to show that no thinking man ever did, or ever could, disbelieve in the existence of the Deity, though he might reject all anthropomorphism, and name him Nature, Law, Chance, or otherwise. But what is novel in Milton's view of God is, that he understands literally what are termed the anthropopathic expressions of Scripture respecting the Deity:—

It is better [says he] to contemplate the Deity, and to conceive of him, not with reference to human passions,—that is, after the manner of men, who are never weary of forming subtle imaginations respecting him,—but after the manner of Scripture, that is, in the

way in which God has offered himself to our contemplation; nor should we think that he would say or direct anything to be written of himself which is inconsistent with the opinion he wishes us to entertain of his character. Let us require no better authority than God himself for determining what is worthy or unworthy of him. If "it repented Jehovah that he had made man," let us believe that it did repent him, only taking care to remember that what is called repentance when applied to God does not arise from inadvertency as in man. . . . Again, if "it grieved the Lord at his heart," and if "his soul was grieved for the misery of Israel," let us believe that it did grieve him. . . . If after the work of six days it be said of God that "he rested and was refreshed;" if it be said that "he feared the wrath of the enemy," let us believe that it is not beneath the dignity of God to grieve in that for which he is grieved, or to be refreshed in that which refresheth him, or to fear in that he feareth. For however we may attempt to soften down such expressions by a latitude of interpretation when applied to the Deity, it comes in the end to precisely the same. If God be said to have "made man in his own image, after his own likeness," and that too not only as to his soul, but also as to his outward form,—unless the same words have different significations here and chap. v. 3, "Adam begat a son in his own likeness after his image,"—and if God habitually assign to himself the members and form of man, why should we be afraid of attributing to him what he attributes to himself,—so long as what is imperfection and weakness, when viewed in reference to ourselves, be considered as most complete and excellent whenever it is imputed to God?

To speak summarily, God either is or he is not such as he represents himself to be. If he be really such, why should we think otherwise of him? If he be not such, on what authority do we say what God has not said? If at least it be his will that we should thus think of him, why does our imagination wander into some other conception? Why should we hesitate to conceive of God according to what he has not hesitated to declare explicitly respecting himself? In arguing thus, we do not say that God is in fashion like unto man in all his parts and members, but that, as far as we are concerned to know, he is of that form which he attributes to himself in the sacred writings. If therefore we persist in entertaining a different conception of the Deity than

that which it is to be presumed he desires should be cherished, inasmuch as he has himself disclosed it to us, we frustrate the purposes of God, instead of rendering him submissive obedience; as if forsooth we wished to show that it was not we who had thought too meanly of God, but God who had thought too meanly of us.

We have here abundant proof of Milton's belief of the doctrine of plenary inspiration, and may perceive how his logical mind pursued it to its legitimate consequences. To any one who reads the Old Testament with a mind free from preconceived notions it must be quite clear that the ancient Israelites conceived of Jehovah in a human form. In truth, who does not? or who can avoid doing so? The *nihil est in intellectu quod non prius fuerit in sensu* of the Aristotelians is perfectly true, and the ideas of reflection, etc. of the metaphysicians are in reality nothing more than mere terms. We cannot conceive an intelligent being without a material form, and the human, as the noblest that we are acquainted with, is naturally that which we ascribe to superior beings. Thus, when in the language of the Articles of the Church we say of God that he is "without body, parts, or passions," the idea in our mind must be pure space; but when we proceed to the positive affirmation "of infinite power," etc., he instantly assumes to us a human form; and perhaps no one's mind can rise to a higher conception than that of the Ancient of Days in the Book of Daniel. But then the mind which is enlarged by philosophy knows that this is a mere conception, that that form is nowhere really existing, and that the most adequate idea of the Deity is the belief that into whatever remote parts of space we may transport ourselves in imagination, we shall find proofs of power, wisdom, and goodness similar to what we observe in this

world, though possibly varied in character and infinitely greater in degree. The error then of Milton lay in assuming that to be fixed which was fleeting and variable, and restricting to place the infinite and unlimited. We shall also find that it rested in some part on the Ptolemaic astronomy.

Milton next proceeds to the consideration of the decrees of God and predestination. What he says on this subject is little more than an expansion of the place of *Paradise Lost*, to which we have referred above. It is one of the fruitless attempts to reconcile the absolute foreknowledge of the Deity with the perfect free-will of man; and it is no discredit to Milton to have failed where every one else has failed.

The nature and character of the Son is next examined into, and at considerable length; and here the suspicion excited by sundry passages of the *Paradise Lost* is amply confirmed. Milton, after evidently long and anxious inquiry, arrived at the conclusion that the doctrine deriving its appellation from Arius, but which had been known in the Church long before the time of that presbyter, was the true one,—that Christ was different from and inferior to God, and had come into existence in time, instead of having been from all eternity.

Were we to imitate the prudent caution of some writers, we would glide softly over this part of our author's theology, and content ourselves with asserting that he was in error, without deigning to examine his arguments. But such a procedure we hold to be unworthy of a biographer of such a man as Milton, who should possess at least a portion of the courage and love of truth by which his subject was distinguished. Besides, we do not believe that the nature of our Lord has been so fully

revealed in Scripture as to authorize us to assert that any one opinion is the exact and incontrovertible truth; for surely that cannot be clearly revealed on which men of equal talent, learning, sagacity, and love of truth have arrived at different conclusions. Thus this very opinion of Milton's has since his time and without a knowledge of his work been openly professed not merely by divines like Clarke and H. Taylor, but even by distinguished prelates of our own Church,—Law, Bishop of Carlisle, for instance, till his later years; and by Doddridge, Taylor, Benson, Price, and other eminent men among the Dissenters.* The utmost perhaps that we are justified in affirming positively is, that “the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in Christ bodily;” but in a manner unrevealed and probably inconceivable to the human intellect.

There are, as is well known, three main opinions, with various branches, on this subject:—1. That which is termed the orthodox one, and which is held by the Greek, the Latin, and the Protestant Churches alike. It will be found in the Nicene and Athanasian Creeds, which the Church of England has unconditionally adopted,—unwisely in our opinion, as it binds her to acknowledge the first four General Councils, and thus enfeebles her in the contest with the Church of Rome.† 2. The Arian, or that held by Milton, of which, though we are unable to receive it, we freely recognize the sublimity and the beauty, and acknowledge that there is no passage in

* The Bishop of Winchester thinks that if Milton had lived to read the works of Bull and Waterland, he would have thought differently. All those divines whom we have named must however have read them.

† The Romish writers assert, and we think with reason, that the doctrine as taught in the Creeds cannot be proved from Scripture alone: see the Bishop of Winchester's note, in p. 80. The same assertion is made in the *Tracts for the Times*.

Scripture relating to this subject which may not be fairly explained on this hypothesis, some perhaps even better on it than on any other. 3. The Socinian or Humanitarian, which regards our Lord as a mere man, and which, whether true or not, is in our opinion so irreconcilable with many passages of Scripture as to require interpretations which set at nought the principles of grammar and logic.

After quoting the passages in the New Testament in which the Father is spoken of by our Lord himself and by St. Paul as the one sole true God, Milton proceeds to examine two of the chief passages which were maintained to assert the Unity in Trinity, as it was termed. The first of these is, "I and my Father are one," John x. 30. Here he argues with much ingenuity and at great length from other places in the same Gospel; but it really surprises us how not only Milton, but commentators in general, should have overlooked the precisely parallel passage, "He that planteth and he that watereth" (*i. e.* Paul and Apollos) "are one," 1 Cor. iii. 8, which would have obviated such an expenditure of labour and ingenuity. The other is, "There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one," 1 John v. 7. Milton was aware how dubious this text was, on account of its absence from so many manuscripts and versions; but he argues that, even granting its genuineness, it is nothing to the purpose. At the present day no critic, to our knowledge, maintains the genuineness of this verse, which is found in no manuscript anterior to the sixteenth century, in no translation but the Vulgate, and in no manuscript of that earlier than the tenth century, and is referred to by none of the Fathers.

To the argument that the Son is at times called God, and even Jehovah, and that the attributes of Deity are assigned him, he replies by showing that the word used for God, even in its plural form *Elohim* (אֱלֹהִים) was of a very indefinite nature, being used of angels and men, even of a single angel or single false god; and he shows the same of Lord, *Adonim* (אֲדֹנִים); and arguing from the texts which assert that no one can see God, he asserts that in the places where it is said that Jehovah appeared, it was not Jehovah himself that was seen. Thus, referring to Isaiah's vision, he says, "It was not God himself that he saw, but perhaps one of the angels clothed in some modification of the Divine glory, or the Son of God himself, the image of the glory of his Father, as John understood the vision. 'These things said Esaias when he saw His glory.' For if he had been of the same essence, he could no more have been seen or heard than the Father himself."

Milton utterly rejects the use of the doctrine of the twofold nature of Christ, as having no foundation in Scripture. Of those who use it he says:—

They are constantly shifting their reasoning, Vertumnus-like, and using the twofold nature of Christ developed in his office of Mediator as a ready subterfuge by which to evade any arguments that may be brought against them. What Scripture says of the Son generally they apply, as suits their purpose, in a partial and restricted sense: at one time to the Son of God, at another to the Son of Man,—now to the Mediator in his divine, now in his human capacity, and now again in his union of both natures.

For this he asserts there is no warrant in Scripture.

Milton makes less use than one might have expected of the passage Phil. ii. 5, which we have always regarded as a main support of Arianism, as it is certainly on that hypothesis that it can be most naturally interpreted; for

every one must see the difficulty presented by the supposition of the omnipresent Being quitting one part of space and proceeding to another. It was probably this difficulty that made both Luther and Calvin understand it of our Lord's life on earth, supposing that by the *form of God* was meant the early, by the *form of a servant* the later, portion of his mortal career. But this is not the sense in which it is understood by the Greek and Latin Churches, and by the greater number of Protestant writers. Neither perhaps was it at any time so understood by Milton. His language on this point, in the Christian Doctrine, however, is not by any means so precise as it is in his poetry.

They also adduce Phil. ii. 6, "Who being in the form of God." But this no more proves him to be God than the phrase which follows—"Took upon him the form of a servant"—proves that he was really a servant, as the sacred writers nowhere use the word *form* for actual being. But if it be contended that the *form of God* is here taken in a philosophical sense for the essential form, the consequence cannot be avoided that when Christ laid aside the form he laid aside also the substance and the efficiency of God; a doctrine against which they protest, and with justice. To be *in the form of God* therefore seems to be synonymous with being in the image of God, which is often predicated of Christ; even as man is also said, though in a much lower sense, to be the image of God, and to be in the image of God, that is, by creation.

Christ therefore having received all these things from the Father, and "being in the form of God, thought it no robbery to be equal with God," namely, because he had obtained them by gift, not by robbery. For if this passage imply his coequality with the Father, it rather refutes than proves his unity of essence; since equality cannot exist but between two or more essences. Further, the phrases, "he did not think it,—he made himself of no reputation" (literally, *he emptied himself*), appear inapplicable to the supreme God; for *to think* is nothing else than to entertain an opinion, which cannot be properly said of God. Nor can the infinite God be said to empty himself any more than to contradict himself, for

infinity and emptiness are opposite terms.* But since he emptied himself of that form of God in which he had previously existed, if the form of God is to be taken for the essence of the Deity itself, it would prove him to have emptied himself of that essence, which is impossible.

Such was the faith of the saints respecting the Son of God ; such is the tenour of the celebrated confession of that faith ; such is the doctrine which alone is taught in Scripture, which is acceptable to God, and has the promise of eternal salvation. . . . Finally, this is the faith proposed to us in the Apostles' Creed, the most ancient and universally received compendium of belief in the possession of the Church.

He next treats of the Holy Spirit :—

With regard to the nature of the Spirit, in what manner it exists, or whence it arose, Scripture is silent ; which is a caution to us not to be too hasty in our conclusions on the subject. . . . The terms *emanation* and *procession*, employed by theologians on the authority of John xv. 26, do not relate to the nature of the Holy Spirit. . . . These words relate rather to the mission than to the nature of the Spirit ; in which sense the Son also is often said *ἐξελθεῖν*, which in my opinion may be translated either to *go forth* or to *proceed* from the Father, without making any difference in the meaning. . . . Since therefore the Spirit is neither said to be generated nor created, nor is any other mode of existence specifically attributed to it in Scripture, we must be content to leave undetermined a point on which the sacred writers have preserved so uniform a silence.

He enumerates the different senses in which the word Spirit occurs in the Old Testament, and he asserts that “undoubtedly neither David nor any other Hebrew under the old covenant believed in the personality of that *good* and *Holy Spirit*, unless perhaps as an angel.” Having quoted some further texts he says :—

Nothing can be more certain than that all these passages, and

* Milton would in effect seem in this treatise to have adopted the opinion of Luther and Calvin, for he says (p. 321), “As Christ emptied himself in *both* his natures, so *both* participate in his exaltation.”

many others in the Old Testament, were understood of the virtue and power of God the Father, inasmuch as the Holy Spirit was not yet given, nor believed in even by those who prophesied that it should be poured forth in the latter times.

He proceeds in like manner to examine the texts of the New Testament relating to the Spirit, and he then replies to those adduced in proof of his divinity and unity with the Father and Son. On one of the strongest, Mat. xxviii. 19, he says:—

Here mention is undoubtedly made of three persons; but there is not a word that determines the divinity or unity or equality of these three. . . . To be baptized therefore *in their name* is to be admitted to those benefits and gifts which we have received through the Son and Holy Spirit. . . . When we are baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, this is not done to impress upon our minds the inherent or relative nature of these three persons, but the benefits conferred by them on those who believe —namely, that our eternal salvation is owing to the Father, our redemption to the Son, and our sanctification to the Spirit.

The conclusion of his discussion is as follows:—

Lest however we should be altogether ignorant who or what the Holy Spirit is, although Scripture nowhere teaches us in express terms, it may be collected from the passages quoted above that the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as he is a minister of God, and therefore a creature, was created or produced of the substance of God, not by a natural necessity, but by the free-will of the agent, probably before the foundations of the world were laid, but later than the Son, and far inferior to him. It will be objected that thus the Holy Spirit is not sufficiently distinguished from the Son. I reply that the Scriptural expressions themselves, *to come forth*, *to go out from the Father*, *to proceed from the Father*, which mean the same in the Greek, do not distinguish the Son from the Holy Spirit, inasmuch as these terms are used indiscriminately with reference to both persons, and signify their mission, not their nature. There is however sufficient reason for placing the name as well as the nature of the Son above that of the Holy Spirit, in the discussion of topics relative to the Deity; inasmuch as the brightness of the

glory of God, and the express image of his person, are said to have been impressed on the one and not on the other.

Having thus given his ideas of the origin and nature of the Son and Spirit, he proceeds to the subject of Creation, or the origin of all other beings and things. This, he says, was effected by God the Father, by means of his Word [the Son] and Spirit, for the manifestation of the glory of his power and goodness. He rejects the ordinary opinion of the original matter of the universe having been formed from nothing, as having no support in the language of Scripture, and being also repugnant to reason. Matter therefore must have existed previous to the Creation, either independently of God, or as having originated from him at some particular point of time. But that matter should have existed of itself from all eternity, he holds to be impossible. "If, on the contrary," says he, "it did not exist from all eternity, it is difficult to understand from whence it derives its origin. There remains therefore but one solution of the difficulty, for which moreover we have the authority of Scripture, namely, that all things are of God."

Having observed that there are four kinds of causes —*efficient, material, formal* and *final*,* he infers that all these four must be in God, and consequently the original substance of matter must be in him. "It was a substance, and derivable from no other source than from the fountain of every substance, though at first confused and formless, being afterwards adorned and digested into order by the hand of God." Hence he deems it evident that no created thing can be finally annihilated.

* "Causa distribuitur in causam a qua, ex qua, per quam, propter quam, id est, efficientem et materiam, aut formam et finem."—Artis Logice i. 3.

The highest heaven, which is the throne and habitation of God and the heavenly powers and angels, he conceives to have been brought into being at a period long anterior to that of the creation of the world; but “it does not follow that heaven should be eternal, nor, if eternal, that it should be God; for it was always in the power of God to produce any effect he pleased, at whatever time and in whatever manner seemed good to him.”

Having given the Scripture account of the creation of man, he subjoins:—

Man having been created after this manner, it is said as a consequence that “man became a living soul;” whence it may be inferred—unless we had rather take the heathen writers for our teachers respecting the nature of the soul—that man is a living being, intrinsically and properly one and individual, not compound or separable; not, according to the common opinion, made up and framed of two distinct and different natures, as of soul and body, but that the whole man is soul and the soul man; that is to say, a body or substance individual, animated, sensitive, and rational; and that the breath of life was neither a part of the divine essence, nor the soul itself, but as it were an inspiration of some divine virtue, fitted for the exercise of life and reason, and infused into the organic body; for man himself, the whole man, when finally created, is called in express terms *a living soul*.

God having completed his whole work of Creation and rested on the seventh day, “it would seem therefore that the human soul is not created daily by the immediate act of God, but propagated from father to son in a natural order.” He shows this to have been the opinion of Tertullian, Augustine, and of the whole Western Church in the time of Jerome, and enforces it by proofs drawn both from revelation and reason.

With regard to the soul of Christ it will be sufficient to answer that its generation was supernatural, and therefore cannot be cited in the discussion of this controversy. Nevertheless even he

is called *the seed of the woman, the seed of David according to the flesh*, that is, undoubtedly, according to his human nature.

There seems therefore no reason why the soul of man should be made an exception to the general law of creation. For, as has been shown before, God breathed the breath of life into the other living beings, and blended it so intimately with matter that the propagation and production of the human form were analogous to those of other forms, and the proper effect of that power which had been communicated to matter by the Deity. Man being formed after the image of God, it followed as a necessary consequence that he should be endued with natural wisdom, holiness, and righteousness: Gen. i. 27, 31, ii. 25; Eccl. vii. 29; Eph. iv. 24; Col. iii. 10; 2 Cor. iii. 18. Certainly without extraordinary wisdom he could not have given names to the whole animal creation with such sudden intelligence: Gen. ii. 20.*

He next treats of the providence of God, or his general governance of the universe; and here, as on the subject of the Decrees of God, he again makes some futile attempts at reconciling foreknowledge with free-will. Thus, having cited passages where God is said to produce evil, he adds:—

But though in these, as well as in many other passages of the Old or New Testament, God distinctly declares that it is himself who impels the sinner to sin, who hardens his heart, who blinds his understanding, and leads him into error; yet on account of the infinite holiness of the Deity, it is not allowable to consider him as in the smallest instance the author of sin. . . . For it is not the human heart in a state of innocence and purity and repugnance to evil that is induced by him to act wickedly and deceitfully; but after it has conceived sin and when it is about to bring forth, He, in his character of sovereign disposer of all things, inclines or biasses it in this or that direction, or toward this or that action, etc.

* This is one of the places where Milton followed traditional ideas. The naming of the animals is not spoken of in a manner to indicate its being a proof of wisdom. In fact all that is asserted respecting the mind of Adam and Eve is that "they were naked and were not ashamed." Yet what a structure of mental and moral perfection has been raised on this foundation!

Surely this is nothing but mere sophistry! Again, he says:—

There is indeed a proverb which says that he who is able to forbid an action and forbids it not, virtually commands it. This maxim is indeed binding on man as a moral precept; but it is otherwise with regard to God. When, in conformity with the language of mankind, he is spoken of as instigating, where he only does not prohibit evil, it does not follow that he therefore bids it, inasmuch as there is no obligation by which he is bound to forbid it.

He just touches on the question of whether a limit has been set to the duration of human life which is not to be passed. This, he says, is clearly intimated in Job xiv. 5, Ps. xc. 10, etc. “It is evident that God, *at least after the fall of man,* limited human life to a certain term, which in the progress of ages, from Adam to David,† gradually became more and more contracted; so that whether this term be one and the same to all, or appointed differently to each individual, it is in the power of no one to prolong or extend its limits.”* God alone can do so, as in the case of Hezekiah; and men may themselves abridge it by their crimes or vices.

When treating of the next subject, The Special Government of Angels, he asserts the fall of some of these beings:—

Angels are either good or evil, Luke ix. 26, viii. 2; for it appears that many of them revolted from God of their own accord before the fall of man,” John viii. 44. “He abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him: when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar and the father of it,” 2 Pet. ii. 4. “God spared not the angels that sinned,” Jude 6. “The angels which

* “This seems to intimate a belief in the doctrine, held by the Fathers and best divines, that if Adam had not sinned he would not have died. The opinion is expressed in the same doubtful manner in a speech of Raphael, Par. Lost, v. 493,” note of Bp. of W.

† Hence perhaps we may infer that Milton believed Ps. xc. to be the composition of David.

kept not their first estate," 1 John iii. 8. "The devil sinneth from the beginning," Ps. civ. 37. "They sacrificed unto devils."

It is interesting to remark on how slight and fallacious a foundation may be raised a doctrine which will command universal assent. Few, if any, in the time of Milton had any doubt but that the evil spirits in whose existence they believed had once been angels of light, and were cast out of heaven for rebelling against the majesty of God; yet the whole theory was nothing more than an application of the Grecian mythes of the Titans, etc. to the Christian pneumatology. Of the passages quoted above only two seem to refer to this subjeet. Jude says, " And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgement of the great day ;" and Peter, " For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell (*ταρταρώσας*), and delivered them into chains of darkness to be reserved unto judgement." This, we may plainly see, is not in accordance with the free range elsewhere ascribed to evil spirits, and it marvellously resembles the Homeric and Hesiodic accounts of the Titans. But the fact is, it is not of what are usually regarded as devils that these writers are speaking, but of " the sons of God who saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all that they chose ;" and their authority was the apocryphal Book of Enoch, of which we now have a translation made from the Ethiopic by the late Archbi-
shop Lawrence.* In this book we find the following passages :—

To Michael likewise the Lord said, Go and announce his crime

* It is not impossible that the very obscure passage, 1 Pet. iii. 19, may be founded also on this book. We doubt if *πνεύματα* alone is ever used of the spirits of men.

to Samyaza, and to the others who are with him who have been associated with women, that they might be polluted with all their impurity. And when all their sons shall be slain, when they shall see the perdition of their beloved, bind them for seventy generations underneath the earth even to the day of judgement and of consummation, until the judgement, the effect of which shall last for ever, shall be completed. Then shall they be taken away into the lowest depths of the fire in torments, and in confinement shall they be shut up for ever. Immediately after this shall he, together with them, burn and perish; they shall be bound until the consummation of many generations.—Chap. x. 15–17.

Then *the Lord* said unto me, Enoch, scribe of righteousness, go tell the watchers of heaven, who have deserted the lofty sky and their holy, everlasting station . . . —Chap. xii. 15.

We may see how accurately these passages accord with those in the Epistles of Peter and Jude.

Milton next treats of man before the Fall. The tree of knowledge, he says, was not a sacrament, as it was usual to call it, but “a symbol of eternal life, or rather perhaps the nutriment by which that life is sustained.” The prohibition to eat of it was not, as it was termed, a *covenant of works*; for no works were required of Adam. Moreover there was no necessity of binding a being, naturally just and holy as man was, to perform that to which he was of himself inclined, nor would he have given any proof of obedience by the performance of works to which he was led by a natural impulse independently of the divine command. An act therefore, in itself indifferent, was selected as the test of obedience.

Of the Sabbath he says, that “it is clear that God hallowed it to himself and dedicated it to rest in remembrance of the consummation of his work;” but as Scripture is silent on the subject, he doubts if any knowledge of it was given to Adam, or to any one previous to the delivery of the Law on Mount Sinai. He gives it as his

opinion that “the most probable supposition is that Moses, who seems to have written the Book of Genesis much later than the promulgation of the law, inserted this sentence from the fourth commandment into what appeared a suitable place for it; where an opportunity was afforded for reminding the Israelites, by a natural and easy transition, of the reason assigned by God, many ages after the event itself, for his command with regard to the observance of the Sabbath by the covenanted people.”

From various places of the Prophets he infers that the Israelites had not previously ever heard of the Sabbath.

Marriage, as having been instituted before the Fall, next comes under consideration. Here he commences by asserting the lawfulness of polygamy, as having been practised by the holy men of old, as Abraham, Jacob, David, with the approbation of God, who even “in an allegorical fiction” (*Ezek. xxiii. 4*) “represents himself as having espoused two wives, Aholah and Aholibah: a mode of speaking which he would by no means have employed, especially at such length, even in a parable, nor indeed have taken upon him such a character at all, if the practice which it implied had been intrinsically dishonourable or shameful.” He then answers, and without difficulty, all the arguments against polygamy drawn from either the Old or the New Testaments.

On what grounds can a practice be considered dishonourable or shameful which is prohibited to no one even under the Gospel? for that dispensation annuls none of the merely civil regulations which existed previous to its introduction. It is only enjoined that elders and deacons should be chosen from such as were husbands of one wife: *1 Tim. iii. 2*; *Tit. i. 6*. This implies, not that to be the husband of more than one wife would be a sin, for in that case the restriction would have been equally imposed on all; but that in proportion as they were less entangled in domestic affairs,

they would be more at leisure for the business of the Church. Since therefore polygamy is interdicted in this passage to the ministers of the Church alone, and that not on account of any sinfulness in the practice, and since none of the other members are precluded from it either here or elsewhere, it follows that it was permitted, as aforesaid, to all the remaining members of the Church, and that it was adopted by many without offence.

Here then we have the deliberate opinion of Milton, a man eminent for purity and holiness of life, that polygamy is permitted by the law of Christ, and may be practised by Christians with innocence. Can any stronger proof be required of the danger of the theory of Plenary Inspiration,—of that of placing the Old and the New Testament on a level in respect of authority, and of regarding the Scriptures as a perfect and ample code of morals? Polygamy *did* prevail under the law, and most certainly it is not prohibited by the Gospel.* The same is the case with slavery; and we know that in the United States many teachers of religion dare to defend it on the very same principle as Milton here defends polygamy, namely, by neglecting the spirit and adhering to the mere letter of Scripture, and assuming that what is not expressly condemned is tacitly permitted. But the perfect law of love and the common feelings of human nature alike condemn it as repugnant to justice and to Christianity.† So also with polygamy: it is only in the East,

* “As for myself,” says Luther, “I avow that I cannot set myself in opposition to men’s marrying several wives, or assert that such a course is repugnant to the Holy Scripture.”

† It is remarkable that Milton is silent on the subject of slavery. It was however but little known of in England in his time, and the use of the word *servant* for *slave* in our translation concealed its appearance in the Bible. At all events it has always been mild in the East. But had he lived to see this “mystery of iniquity” in its full development in the United States, how trumpet-tongued would he have been in denouncing it! There the institution of breeding-states has been devised;

where man is despotic in both public and private life, that one man is permitted to engross many women. Where freedom prevails, as in ancient and modern Europe, the rights of the female sex are respected. Besides, all statistics prove that the union of one man with one woman is the law of nature, for the excess of births is on the side of the males. Indeed, though Milton shows that it is no necessary consequence, the same rule seems very plainly to be intimated in the Scripture account of the origin of human society.

It is strange how it could have escaped the penetration of Milton, that the passages he quotes from the Epistles to Timothy and Titus prove nothing in favour of his theory ; for it is said in the former, “ Let not a widow be taken into the number under threescore years old, having been the wife of one man ; ” and surely, if the former passages favour polygamy, this is quite as strong in favour of polyandry. But the truth is, there was no such thing as polygamy known at that time among either Jews or Greeks. It had been no doubt practised in old times by the former, but after their return from the Captivity they seem to have given it up ; and it is only

there, instead of seeking to diminish the evil by making free those who had any admixture of white blood, they are held to be slaves as long as any admixture of black blood can be traced ; *there* education and even religion is withheld from the slave ; *there*, instead of seeking to limit the extent of slavery, every effort is made to spread it over new regions ; *there*, in the Atlantic cities of New York and Baltimore, are to be found the merchants and shipbuilders, without whose aid the African slave-trade would have ceased many years ago. We hold it to be the duty of every one, however humble and obscure, to raise his voice in condemnation of this iniquity of iniquities ; and we firmly believe, if there be truth in history, that it will yet bring down on the United States the vengeance of Heaven. How it is to be deplored that England, by her purchase of the produce of slave-labour, should be, though involuntarily, an upholder of slavery !

in the cases of the lawless, self-willed despot Herod, who had nine wives,* that we meet with an instance of it. As Islam limits the number of wives to four, so the custom of Israel seems, except in the case of kings and rulers, to have limited it to two; for from the antediluvian Lamech down, we do not find any polygamist to have exceeded that number. This too explains the precept about marrying a wife's sister.† It simply means, if you propose taking a second wife, choose a stranger rather than a sister of your present wife, experience having shown perhaps that sisters were less likely to live in harmony than those who were not related.

In marriage, the requisites, as Milton deduces them from Scripture, are consent of parties, and that free and unbiassed; consent of parents, unity of sentiment on religion, freedom from the degrees of affinity specified in the Levitical law. "Marriage," says he, "is honourable in itself, and prohibited to no order of men; wherefore the Papists act contrary to religion in excluding the ministers of the Church from this rite." At the same time it "is not a command binding on all, but only on those who are unable to live with chastity out of this state."

By natural consequence the subject next treated of is divorce, or the dissolution of the nuptial tie,—a subject on which, many years before the composition of this treatise, Milton had thought long and written much.

* See Joseph. Ant. xvii. 1.

† The directions given in Leviticus were precepts rather than laws, and so some of them seem not to have been very strictly observed. One was not to marry a half-sister; and yet we may see from the words of Tamar to Amnon (2 Sam. xiii. 13) that in the time of David such a union might take place, in Israel as in Attica. Besides, Abraham was the ideal of moral perfection in the eyes of an Israelite, and he and Sarah were thus related; so also Jacob was married to two sisters.

The general, and indeed we might say natural, supposition was that his opinions on the subject were biassed by his own circumstances ; but this work proves, as the Bishop of Winchester justly observes, that though those circumstances may have first drawn his attention to the subject, “ his sentiments respecting divorce were deliberately conceived, and that the treatises which he printed during his lifetime were not merely intended to serve a temporary purpose in which he was personally interested.”

In his early treatises, Milton, his feelings being deeply engaged, and the prejudices of the world against which he had to contend strong and nearly inflexible, had to present the subject under every point of view, to use every argument, obviate every objection. Hence he was copious, elaborate, and at times declamatory. But here, where he was only simply recording his own convictions, not seeking to persuade others, he is dispassionate, calm, and brief. He saw that the whole Scriptural argument (with which alone he had to do) for the indissolubility of marriage rested on the saying of our Lord, that fornication alone on the part of the woman justified its dissolution. His task then was to show that the words of our Lord did not necessarily bear the sense that was put on them.

“ They two shall be one flesh” does not imply that marriage is absolutely indissoluble, but only that it ought not to be lightly dissolved. It in reality only expresses a fact, “ What God hath joined together let no man put asunder.” What it is that God has joined together, the institution of marriage itself declares. God has joined only what admits of union,—what is suitable, what is good, what is honourable ; he has not made provision for unnatural and monstrous associations, pregnant only with dishonour, with misery, with hatred, and with calamity. It is not God who

forms such unions, but violence or rashness or error, or the influence of some evil genius. Why then should it be unlawful to deliver ourselves from so pressing an intestine evil? Further, our doctrine does not separate those whom God has joined together in the spirit of his sacred institution, but only those whom God himself separated by the authority of his equally sacred law;—an authority which ought to have the same force with us now as with his people of old.* . . . *Fornication* signifies not adultery only, but either what is called *any unclean* thing, or a defect in some particular which might justly be required in a wife; Deut. xxiv. 1; . . . or it signifies whatever is found to be irreconcilably at variance with love or fidelity or help or society,—that is, with the objects of the original institution; as Selden proves, and as I have myself shown in another treatise from several texts of Scripture.

He quotes the passage, Judges xix. 2, “ His concubine played the whore against him,” “ not by committing adultery, for in that case she would not have dared to flee to her father’s house, but by refractory behaviour toward her husband.” He also refers to St. Paul’s opinion given to the Corinthians, that the departure of one party from the other (which he regards as coming under his definition of fornication) was a dissolution of the marriage.

It is not to be supposed that Christ would expunge from the Mosaic law any enactment which could afford scope for the exercise of mercy toward the wretched and afflicted; or that his declaration on the present occasion was intended to have the force of a judicial decree ordaining new and severer regulations on the subject; but that having exposed the abuses of the law, he proceeded, after his usual manner, to lay down a more perfect rule of conduct, disclaiming on this as on all other occasions the office of a judge, and inculcating truth by simple admonition, not by compulsory decrees. It is therefore a most flagrant error to convert a Gospel precept into a civil statute, and enforce it by legal penalties.

Nothing can be more just than these observations: they give the true conception which we should form of

* Yet we shall find him by-and-by maintaining that the whole Mosaic Law, even the Decalogue included, was abrogated.

the various expressions of our Lord, which, if taken rigorously in the literal sense, would produce, as they but too often have done, the most injurious consequences. It was no part of our Lord's office to give particular laws and regulations. He laid down the one great rule of charity, or love of our kind, by which our conduct should be guided ; and to human reason was left the task of devising civil regulations in conformity with this rule. The question then with respect to divorce is, how far and under what limitations it may conduce to human happiness. Marriage is in reality, though the Church of Rome maintains the contrary, only a civil contract, and therefore may, by natural equity, be dissolved by the consent of the parties ; but in all countries the civil law steps in to regulate it. In Roman Catholic countries it is held to be a religious engagement, and therefore indissoluble, and the consequence is a general disregard of its duties ; in Lutheran countries divorce is permitted under almost any pretext, and the result does not appear favourable to the cause of good order and morality ; in England it is only permitted in case of adultery on the part of the woman, and the remedy is made so expensive that it is in fact attainable only by the wealthy. A modification of the law on this subject seems therefore desirable. There are no doubt other cases beside adultery, such as that of causeless and obstinate desertion, which might justify a dissolution of the nuptial tie; but the matter is extremely delicate, and much depends upon national character and feeling ; so that no one can venture accurately to foretell what the effects of any change might be, and all legislation on the subject could be only tentative.

The Fall of man and the introduction of sin into the world come next under consideration. The sin which is

common to all men, *i. e.* original sin,* “originated,” he says, “first, in the instigation of the devil, as is clear from the narrative in Gen. iii., and from 1 John iii. 8: ‘He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.’ Secondly, in the liability to fall with which man was created, whereby he, as the devil had done before him, ‘abode not in the truth,’ John viii. 44; nor ‘kept his first estate, but left his own habitation,’ Jude 6.” He then proceeds rather sophistically to show how this act was a transgression of the whole law, as it contained in it all vices and evil deeds. In this transgression the whole future race of man must have shared, since all partake of the penalty. This he shows to be in conformity with the divine proceedings, and a principle “recognized by all nations and under all religions from the earliest period.” The punishment of all for this one transgression is death, respecting which he agrees with those divines who enumerate four degrees of death, namely—first, all those evils which lead to it, and which came into the world with the fall of man; secondly, spiritual death, or “the loss of divine grace and of that innate righteousness wherein man in the beginning lived unto God;” thirdly, the death of the body, that is, according to his view, of the entire man; fourthly, “death eternal, the punishment of the damned.” To this last however the penalty of Adam does not ex-

* Milton would appear to have objected to the phrase “original sin,” which occurs only once in Paradise Lost (ix. 1003). He says, as is we believe the truth, that it was first used by Augustine. The Bishop of Winchester (p. 267) quotes a passage from Cyprian in which it occurs; but the writings of that Father, as is well known, had been tampered with. “Evil concupiscence,” says Milton, “is that of which our original parents were first guilty, and which they transmitted to their posterity, as sharers in the primary transgression, in the shape of an innate propensity to sin.”

tend ;* for, as he afterwards observes, it is only menaced to those who shall not believe, and “by unbelievers those only can be meant to whom Christ had been announced in the Gospel; for ‘how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?’ Rom. x. 14.” In Milton’s view therefore, man, soul and body, after undergoing the toils and sufferings of this mortal life, sinks into a sleep which would be perpetual, *i. e.* what is regarded as annihilation, had it not been for the restoration effected by the Son, of which he next proceeds to treat.

This restoration comprises redemption and renovation. The former was effected by Christ at the price of his own blood, by his own voluntary act, in conformity with the eternal counsel and grace of God the Father. In Christ’s character as Redeemer are to be considered his nature and office; the former of which, according to the views of the writer, having been already shown, the mystery, as it is frequently termed in Scripture, of his Incarnation comes next to be considered; and Milton commences this subject with the following just and Christian observations :—

Since then this mystery is so great, we are admonished by that very consideration not to assert anything respecting it rashly or presumptuously on mere grounds of philosophical reasoning; not to add to it anything of our own; not even to adduce in its behalf any passage of Scripture of which the purpose may be doubtful, but to be contented with the clearest texts, however few in number. If we listen to such passages, and are willing to acquiesce in the simple truth of Scripture unencumbered by metaphysical comments, to how many prolix and preposterous arguments shall

* On this point, as on some others, he would seem to have altered his views after he had composed *Paradise Lost*. He there says :—

“ And now without redemption all mankind
Must have been lost, adjudged to death and hell
By doom severe, had not the Son of God,” etc.—iii. 222.

we put an end! how much occasion of heresy shall we remove! how many ponderous dabblings in theology shall we cast out, purging the temple of God from the contamination of their rubbish! Nothing would be more plain and agreeable to reason, nothing more suitable to the understanding even of the meanest individual, than such parts of the Christian faith as are declared in Scripture to be necessary for salvation, if teachers, even of the Reformed Church, were as yet sufficiently impressed with the propriety of insisting on nothing but divine authority in matters relating to God, and of limiting themselves to the contents of the sacred volume. What is essential would easily appear, when freed from the perplexities of controversy; what is mysterious would be suffered to remain inviolate, and we should be fearful of overstepping the bounds of propriety in its investigation.

Milton rejects, as Scripture is silent on the point, the doctrine of the *hypostatic union*, as it is termed, namely, "that two natures are so combined in the one person of Christ, that he has a real and perfect subsistence in the one nature independently of that which properly belongs to the other, insomuch that two natures are comprehended in one person," *i. e.* that he is "perfect God and perfect man," according to the Creed. "He took upon him," says Zanchius, "not man, properly speaking, but the human nature. For the Logos, being in the womb of the Virgin, assumed the human nature, by forming a body of the substance of Mary, and creating at the same time a soul to animate it. Moreover such was his intimate and exclusive assumption of this nature, that it never had any separate existence independent of the Logos, but did then first subsist and has ever since subsisted in the Logos alone." Here Milton very justly observes, that one might infer that Zanchius had been an actual witness of the mystery which he describes so confidently.

Milton on the other hand, among other things, maintains that "if the human nature of Christ never had any

proper and independent subsistence, or if the Son did not take upon him that subsistence, it would have been no more possible for him to have been made very man, or even to have assumed the real and perfect substance or essence of man, than for the body of Christ to be present in the Sacrament, without quantity or local extension, as the Papists assert.” His final opinion is, that “there is in Christ a mutual hypostatic union of two natures, *i. e.* of two essences, of two substances, and consequently of two persons; nor does this union prevent the respective properties of each from remaining individually distinct. That the fact is so is sufficiently certain: the mode of union is unknown to us; and it is best to be ignorant of what God wills should remain unknown.”

In treating of the mediatorial office of Christ, when he comes to speak of his death Milton expresses his belief that this extended to his divine nature also. “For not a few passages of Scripture,” says he, “intimate that his divine nature was subjected to death conjointly with his human: passages too clear to be explained away by the supposition of idiomatic language.”

The satisfaction of Christ consisted in his fulfilling the law by perfect love to God and his neighbour, until the time when he laid down his life for his brethren, and in his paying “the required price for [*i. e.* instead of] all mankind.” After citing the passages which support this last view, he subjoins: “It is in vain that the evidence of these texts is endeavoured to be evaded by those who maintain that Christ died, not in our stead and for our redemption, but merely for our advantage in the abstract, and as an example to mankind.” He then triumphantly proves, in opposition to the Calvinists, that this satisfac-

tion was made for the whole race of men, and was not confined to the Elect.

Regeneration, as defined by Milton, is

That change operated by the Word and the Spirit, whereby, the old man being destroyed, the inward man is regenerated by God after his own image, in all the faculties of his mind, insomuch as he becomes as it were a new creature, and the whole man is sanctified, both in body and soul, for the service of God and the performance of good works.

The effects of regeneration are repentance and faith :—

The ultimate object of faith is not Christ the Mediator, but God the Father: a truth which the weight of Scripture evidence has compelled divines to acknowledge. For the same reason it ought not to appear wonderful if many, both Jews and others who lived before Christ, and many also who have lived since his time, but to whom he has never been revealed, should be saved by faith in God alone; still however, through the sole merits of Christ, inasmuch as he was given and slain from the beginning of the world, even for those to whom he was not known, provided they believed in God the Father. Hence honourable testimony is borne to the faith of the illustrious patriarchs who lived under the law—Abel, Enoch, Noah, etc.,—though it is expressly stated that they believed only in God.

“Justification is,” he says, “the gratuitous purpose of God, whereby those who are regenerate and planted in Christ are absolved from sin and death through his most perfect satisfaction, and accounted just in the sight of God, not by the works of the law, but through faith.” When speaking of the satisfaction of Christ he says, apparently on the authority of a single text (2 Cor. v. 21), that our sins are imputed to Christ; and on that of two others (1 Cor. i. 30, Rom. iv. 6), that “the merits or righteousness of Christ are imputed to us through faith.”

As when speaking of the works of the law he terms them “the works of the *written* law” (*i. e.* the Mosaic

law), it is plain that Milton understood them in this sense in the large quotations which he makes on the subject from St. Paul's Epistles, and hence he finds no difficulty in reconciling St. Paul and St. James: the former, as he says, speaking of the works of the law (*i. e.* the written law); the latter, of those which spring from a lively faith:—

The Apostles who treat this point of our religion with particular attention, nowhere, in summing up their doctrine, use words implying that a man is justified by faith alone, but generally conclude as follows, that “a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.” . . . Hence we are justified by faith without the works of the law, but not without the works of faith; inasmuch as a living and true faith cannot consist without works, though the latter may differ from the works of the written law.

On the subjects of Assurance and Final Perseverance Milton held with the Remonstrant, in opposition to the Calvinist divines, that they were conditional, and that the elect might fall away for ever.*

The Law of God is either unwritten or written. The former is what is called the Law of Nature, given originally to Adam, and of which “a certain remnant or imperfect illumination still dwells in the heart of all mankind; which in the regenerate, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, is daily tending toward a renewal of its primitive brightness.”

The written law is twofold—the Mosaic Law and the Gospel:—

* Referring on this occasion to an argument of the Calvinists from 1 John iii. 9, he says: “We are not at liberty thus to separate a particular verse from its context without carefully comparing its meaning with other verses of the same chapter and epistle, as well as with texts bearing on the same subject in other parts of Scripture, lest the Apostle should be made to contradict either himself or the other sacred writers.” —P. 396.

The Mosaic law was a written code, consisting of many precepts, intended for the Israelites *alone*, with a promise of [*temporal*] life to such as should keep them, and a curse on such as should be disobedient; to the end that they being led thereby to an acknowledgment of the depravity of mankind, and consequently of their own, might have recourse to the righteousness of the promised Saviour, and that they, and in process of time all other nations, might be led, under the Gospel, from the weak and servile rudiments of this elementary institution to the full strength of the new creature and a manly liberty worthy the sons of God.

The Gospel is the new dispensation of the covenant of grace, far more excellent and perfect than the Law, announced first obscurely by Moses and the Prophets, afterwards in the clearest terms by Christ himself and his Apostles and Evangelists, written since by the Holy Spirit in the hearts of believers, and ordained to continue even to the end of the world, containing a promise of eternal life to all in all nations who shall believe in Christ when revealed to them, and a threat of eternal death to such as shall not believe.

On the introduction of the Gospel or new covenant through faith in Christ, the whole of the preceding covenant,—in other words, the entire Mosaic law,—was abolished. . . . We are therefore absolved from subjection to the Decalogue as fully as to the rest of the Law.

This last position he proves with great copiousness and force of argument. But he subjoins:—

It appears therefore, as well from the evidence of Scripture as from the arguments above adduced, that the whole of the Mosaic law is abolished by the Gospel. It is to be observed however that the sum and essence of the Law is not hereby abrogated, its purpose being attained in that love of God and our neighbour which is born of the Spirit through faith. It was with justice therefore that Christ asserted the permanence of the Law. Matt. v. 17; Rom. iii. 31, viii. 4.

The sacraments,* or outward signs of the sealing of

* It is rather remarkable that Milton should have retained this term, which is only to be found in the Fathers. It was the application to Christianity of the Roman *sacramentum*, or military oath, and therefore properly belongs only to baptism. This view of it is given in our Baptismal Service.

the covenant, come next under consideration. These under the Law, he says, were two—Circumcision and the Passover; under the Gospel they are two also—Baptism and the Lord's Supper:—

Baptism is that rite wherein the bodies of believers who engage themselves to pureness of life *are immersed in running water*, to signify their regeneration by the Holy Spirit and their union with Christ in his death, burial, and resurrection.

Hence it follows that infants are not to be baptized, inasmuch as they are incompetent to receive instruction or to believe, or to enter into a covenant, or to promise or answer for themselves, or even to hear the word. For how can infants, who understand not the word, be purified thereby, any more than adults can receive edification by hearing an unknown language? For it is not the outward baptism, which purifies only the filth of the flesh, that saves us, but “*the answer of a good conscience*,” as Peter testifies; of which infants are incapable. Besides, baptism is not merely a covenant containing a certain stipulation on one side, with a corresponding engagement on the other, which in the case of an infant is impossible, but it is also a vow, and as such can neither be pronounced by infants nor required of them.

He then, in his wonted manner, discusses and refutes the “futile arguments,” as he terms them, of those who maintain the contrary opinion. In this he had an easy task, for few will venture to deny that infant baptism rests entirely on the authority and practice of the Church.

We have seen that Milton holds immersion, and even that in running water, to be essential to baptism. The passages (Mark vii. 4, Luke xi. 38) quoted to prove that to dip and to sprinkle mean the same thing, do not so, he says, by any means, “since in washing we do not sprinkle the hands, but immerse them.”* Observing

* Yet surely the jailor at Philippi and his family could hardly have been baptized in a running stream, or indeed, we may almost say, by immersion at all.

that the Apostles and many others seem to have rested in the baptism of John, he proceeds to say :—

According to which analogy I should be inclined to conclude that those persons who have been baptized while yet infants, and perhaps in other respects irregularly, have no need of second baptism when arrived at maturity.* Indeed I should be disposed to consider baptism itself as necessary for proselytes only, and not for those born in the Church, had not the Apostle taught that baptism is not merely an initiatory rite, but a figurative representation of our death, burial, and resurrection with Christ.†

The Lord's Supper is [he says] a solemnity in which the death of Christ is commemorated by the breaking of bread and pouring out of wine, both of which elements are tasted by each individual communicant, and the benefits of his death thereby sealed to believers.

Among the passages of Scripture adduced by Milton on this subject we find a part of the sixth chapter of the Gospel of St. John, but he acknowledges that it does not exclusively relate to the Lord's Supper, but to the participation by faith of any of the benefits of Christ's incarnation. He adds more correctly—"That *living bread* which Christ calls his *flesh*, and that *blood* which is *drink indeed*, can be nothing but the doctrine of Christ's having become man to shed his blood for us." In fact, the whole and sole object of that Gospel,—in which we rarely meet with moral precepts,—seems to have been to prove that Christ was the Logos who had taken flesh. The bread, then, which came down from heaven was the Logos, and the eating of it was the believing in the

* This was evidently Milton's own case. It would seem that he had not adopted these new views respecting baptism until after the birth of his children, for they must have been christened in the usual manner.

† This is but feeble reasoning, for no doctrine or practice should ever be founded on figurative language. Still we cannot see any valid objection to infant-baptism when properly understood as a solemn rite of admission into the Christian Church.

incarnation. It does not appear that there was, or well could be, any allusion to the Lord's Supper, which, according to this Gospel, was not instituted till a year afterwards, and of the institution of which it gives no account.

Consubstantiation, and above all the papistical doctrine of transubstantiation—or rather anthropophagy, for it deserves no better name—are irreconcilable not only with reason and common sense and the habits of mankind, but with the testimony of Scripture, with the nature and end of a sacrament, with the analogy of baptism, with the ordinary forms of language, with the human nature of Christ, and finally with the state of glory in which he is to remain till the day of judgement.

As great stress is laid by the advocates for that monstrous doctrine on the words “this *is* my body,” he quotes numerous passages from Scripture where a thing is said to be what it represents. Such are “It (*i. e.* the lamb) is the Lord's passover,” Exod. xii. 11; “Is not this (*i. e.* the water) the blood of the men that went in jeopardy of their lives?” 2 Sam. xxiii. 17; “That rock was Christ,” 1 Cor. x. 4; “The seven kine are seven years,” Gen. xli. 27; “The seven heads are seven mountains,” Rev. xvii. 9; “The ten horns are ten kings,” *ib.* 12. In fact there is hardly a language on the face of the earth that does not employ this most simple figure. Do not we ourselves say in looking at a portrait, That is such-a-one? Even in the plays of little children we may observe the frequent use of this metaphor.* Yet we see what a structure of priestly domination Rome has reared on it!

Sacraments, in the opinion of Milton, are not abso-

* “This shoe,” says Launce, “is my father . . . this shoe is my mother . . . this staff is my sister . . . this hat is Nan, our maid; I am the dog,” etc.—*Two Gent. of Verona*, ii. 3. We trust we shall not be accused of levity in quoting this passage; our object is to show the universality and familiarity of this mode of speech.

lutely indispensable, for many have been saved without participating in them; and the seal does not constitute the covenant, but is only an evidence of it. "Assuredly," says he, "if a sacrament be nothing more than what it is defined, a seal or visible representation of God's benefits to us, he cannot be wrong who reposes the same faith in God's promises without as with this confirmation, in cases where it is not possible for him to receive it duly and conveniently; especially as so many opportunities are open to him through life of evincing his gratitude to God and commemorating the death of Christ, though not in the precise mode and form which God had instituted."*

As it is nowhere said in Scripture that the Lord's Supper was administered by an appointed minister, Milton knows "no reason why ministers refuse to permit the celebration of it except when they themselves are allowed to administer it." To the argument from the example of Christ he replies that it is not said that he gave it to each person individually, and besides he was acting in the character of an institutor, not of a minister. To that from 1 Cor. iv. 1, where St. Paul seems to speak of himself and others as "ministers and stewards of the mysteries of God," he replies by showing that the mysteries in question were doctrines and not sacraments. From the analogy of the passover he concludes "that the master of a family, or any one appointed by him, is at liberty to celebrate the Lord's Supper from house to house, as was done in the dispensation of the passover; if indeed we are to suppose that any distribution of the elements by an individual officiator was then or is now requisite."

The Mass of the Papists differs from the Lord's Supper in several respects. In the first place, the one is an ordinance of our Lord,

* Here again Milton had his own case in view.

ration. These “were not written for occasional purposes only, as is the doctrine of the Papists,* but for the use of the Church throughout all ages, as well under the Gospel as under the Law.” The use of them is prohibited to no one; on the contrary, they are adapted for the daily hearing or reading of all classes and orders. “Partly by reason of their own simplicity, and partly through the Divine illumination, they are plain and perspicuous in all things necessary to salvation, and adapted to the instruction of even the most unlearned, through the medium of diligent and constant reading.” The liberty of investigating Scripture thoroughly is granted to all; but it is not “to be interpreted by the judgement of men,—that is, by our own unassisted judgement,—but by means of that Holy Spirit promised to all believers.”

If, then, the Scriptures be in themselves so perspicuous and sufficient of themselves “to make men wise unto salvation through faith,” and that “the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished with all good works,” through what infatuation is it that even Protestant divines persist in darkening the most momentous truths of religion by intricate metaphysical comments, on the plea that such explanation is necessary: stringing together all the useless technicalities and empty distinctions of scholastic barbarism, for the purpose of elucidating those Scriptures which they are continually extolling as models of plainness! As if Scripture, which possesses in itself the clearest light, and is sufficient for its own explanation, especially in matters of faith and holiness, required to have the simplicity of its divine truths more fully developed and placed in a more distinct view by illustrations drawn from the abstrusest of human sciences, falsely so called.

For the *public* interpretation of Scripture however, more, he acknowledges, is required, and he approves of the following requisites laid down, but not always observed, he says, by divines:—

* A doctrine however by no means altogether wrong.

Knowledge of languages ; inspection of the originals ; examination of the contexts ; care in distinguishing between literal and figurative expressions ; considerations of cause and circumstance, of antecedents and consequents ; mutual comparison of texts ; and regard to the analogy of faith. Attention must also be paid to the frequent anomalies of syntax ; as, for example, where the relative does not refer to the immediate antecedent, but to the principal word in the sentence, though more remote. . . . Lastly, no inferences from the text are to be admitted but such as follow necessarily and plainly from the words themselves ; lest we should be constrained to receive what is not written for what is written, the shadow for the substance, the fallacies of human reasoning for the doctrines of God ; for it is by the declarations of Scripture, and not by the conclusions of the schools, that our consciences are bound.

Every believer has a right to interpret the Scriptures for himself, inasmuch as he has the Spirit for his guide, and the mind of Christ is in him ; nay, the expositions of the public interpreter can be of no use to him, except so far as they are confirmed by his own conscience.

No church therefore, and much less the civil magistrate, has a right to impose its own interpretations on us as laws, or to require implicit faith.

The ordinary ministers of a church are two, bishops or presbyters—for he shows from various places of Scripture that they were the same—and deacons. The choice of them belongs to the people ; and they should undergo a trial previous to their admission. They are entitled to a remuneration for their services, but it should be voluntary.

To exact or bargain for tithes or other stipendiary payments under the Gospel, to extort them from the flock under the alleged authority of civil edicts, or to have recourse to civil actions and legal processes for the recovery of allowances purely ecclesiastical, is the part of wolves rather than of ministers of the Gospel. . . . If it be scarcely allowable for a Christian to go to law with his adversary in defence even of his own property (Matt. v. 39, 40 ; 1 Cor. vi. 7), what are we to think of an ecclesiastic who for the sake of tithes, *i.e.* of the property of others, which either as an

offering made out of the spoils of war, or in pursuance of a vow voluntarily contracted by an individual, or from an imitation of that agrarian law established among the Jews, but altogether foreign to our habits, and which is not only abolished itself, but of which all the causes have ceased to operate—were due indeed formerly, and to ministers of another sect, but are now due to no one;—what are we to think of a pastor who for the recovery of claims thus founded—an abuse unknown to any reformed church but our own—enters into litigation with his own flock, or more properly speaking with a flock which is not his own? If his own, how avaricious in him to be so eager in making a gain of his holy office! if not his own, how iniquitous! Moreover what a piece of officiousness, to force his instructions on such as are unwilling to receive them! what extortion, to exact the price of teaching from one who disclaims the teacher, and whom the teacher himself would equally disclaim as a disciple were it not for the profit!

To the question of how then were the teachers to live, he replies:—

How ought they to live, but as the prophets and apostles lived of old?—on their own private resources, by the exercise of some calling, by honest industry, after the example of the prophets, who accounted it no disgrace to be able to hew their own wood and build their own houses (2 Kings vi. 2); of Christ, who wrought with his own hands as a carpenter (Mark vi. 3); and of Paul (Acts xviii. 3, 4), to whom the plea, so importunately urged in modern times, of the expensiveness of a liberal education and the necessity that it should be repaid out of the wages of the Gospel, seems never to have occurred.

We cannot refrain from making here a few observations. In what Milton says on the subject of tithes, it is plain that he goes, like nearly all the opponents of them, on the supposition that they are paid to the minister by his flock out of their own property. Now be the policy of tithes as a mode of paying the teachers of religion what it may—for we enter not now into that question—there is nothing more certain than that they are the property of the clergy as a body, as surely as landed

estates are of their owners. If a man purchases an estate or a house, he purchases it *minus* the tithes, and gives so much the less for it; if he takes a farm or a house, he gives so much the less rent in consequence of the demands of the clergy. Even in building houses or reclaiming lands, the additional rent, as we may term it, that will thence arise is taken into consideration. But self-interest enters too much into the calculation to allow men to reason calmly on the subject: the owners or the tenants of lands or houses know that if they could succeed in abolishing tithe, etc., their own incomes would be increased, and they therefore close their ears against all the arguments of policy and justice. Hence, we fear, arises much of the so-called conscientious resistance to church-rates. It must not for a moment be supposed that we even dream of imputing such low motives to Milton; we only mean that he took an erroneous view of the subject. At the same time we confess that we dislike the system of tithe or tithe-rentcharge, to be collected by the minister himself, as prejudicial to the cause of religion, and think that a better system might easily be devised. As for Milton's plan of a self-supporting ministry, a very slight knowledge of human nature will suffice to show that it is perfectly Utopian.*

Each particular church consists of the ministers and the people. As to the last, "only such are to be accounted of that number as are well taught in Scripture doctrine, and capable of trying by the rule of Scripture and the Spirit any teacher whatever, or even the whole collective body of teachers, although arrogating to themselves the exclusive name of the Church."

* He discusses the matters here noticed at length in his treatise of 'The Likeliest Means to remove Hirelings out of the Church.'

Every church consisting of the above parts, however small its numbers, is to be considered as in itself an integral and perfect church, so far as regards its religious rights ; nor has it any superior on earth, whether individual, or assembly, or convention, to whom it can be lawfully required to render submission ; inasmuch as no believer out of its pale, nor any order or council of men whatever, has a greater right than itself to expect a participation in the written word and the promises, in the presence of Christ, in the presiding influences of the Spirit, and in those gracious gifts which are the reward of united prayer.

Of Councils in the modern sense, *i. e.* synods of bishops or elders, who have no gift of inspiration beyond other men, as he finds no traces in Scripture, he rejects them unconditionally. The custom however of holding assemblies, *i. e.* meeting together for worship and instruction, which the Apostles derived from the synagogue, is, he thinks, to be maintained ; but “according to the apostolical institution, which did not ordain that an individual, and he a stipendiary, should have the sole right of speaking from a higher place, but that each believer in turn should be authorized to speak, or prophesy, or teach, or exhort, according to his gifts ; insomuch that even the weakest among the brethren had the privilege of asking questions, and consulting the elders and more experienced members of the congregation.” Women however were enjoined to keep silence in the church.

Each particular church has the *power of the keys*, *i. e.* the right of administering discipline, which extends even to the ejecting of members, “not however for their destruction, but rather for their preservation, if so they may be induced to repent.”

The civil power differs from the ecclesiastical in this—that *every* man is subject to it, that it only has power over the body and external faculties of man, and that it

punishes even those who confess their faults. The ecclesiastical, on the contrary, has power only over the members of the church, addresses itself solely to the mind, and pardons the penitent. “It is therefore highly derogatory to the power of the Church, as well as an utter want of faith, to suppose that her government cannot be properly administered without the intervention of the civil magistrate.”

Having thus conducted man all through his course on earth, he concludes by treating of his final glorification. He enumerates the signs of the coming of Christ to judgement, as they are given in the Gospels, and by St. Paul; and he is inclined to agree with those who include among them “the calling of the entire nation of the Jews, as well as of the ten dispersed tribes.”

The second advent of Christ will be followed by the resurrection of the dead and the last judgement.

The doctrine of the resurrection of the dead, he maintains, was believed even before the time of the Gospel, and it was confirmed by the testimony of Christ. In proof of it, he adds to the passages of Scripture in its favour, the following three arguments, he says, from reason, but in reality from Scripture also. 1. The covenant with God is not dissolved by death (Mat. xxii. 32); 2. If there be no resurrection of the dead, Christ is not risen (1 Cor. xv. 13 *seq.*); 3. “Were there no resurrection, the righteous would be of all men the most miserable; and the wicked, who have a better portion in this life, most happy, which would be altogether inconsistent with the providence and justice of God.”

We must here pause to observe that this last argument is feeble, and to a certain extent untrue. It arose from what we must regard as an unfortunate habit of Milton’s

mind—the refusing to assent to the very rational doctrine of the writers of the Church of Rome, that many passages of Scripture only related to particular persons and circumstances, and are not of universal application. In the passage of St. Paul's Epistle to the Corinthians on which he founds this assertion, the apostle was evidently speaking of his own peculiar case.* But experience confirms the truth of other passages of Scripture, namely, that “godliness is great gain,” and that it has “promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come.” We have only to look around us and see that though the balance of worldly prosperity may not be so, that of real and substantial happiness almost always is on the side of the pious and virtuous portion of mankind.

As to the doctrine, not of the resurrection, but of a future state of existence, there is an argument simpler and stronger than any usually brought forward in its favour. It is this: it is utterly impossible for the human mind to conceive its own non-existence, or even a pause in its existence; it would in fact be to conceive itself to be and not to be at the same point of time; for thinking is our being. We can easily conceive the non-existence of others, but not of ourselves, of the *I*, the sentient thinking being; and with others in view we can say with Seneca, *Mors est aut finis aut transitus*; but with regard

* We may here observe that St. Paul was in the constant habit of using the first person plural instead of the singular; such is particularly the case all through the Second Epistle to the Corinthians. Thus when (1 Cor. iv. 9) he says “us the apostles,” he means “me the apostle,” just as Cicero, speaking of himself alone, says *nos consules*. This rhetoric plural, as it is called, occurs frequently in Euripides. Another practice of St. Paul's, namely, that of joining others with him in the address and then proceeding to write in his own person (singular or plural), will also be found in Cicero: see his Letters to Tiro.

to ourselves only, *Mors est transitus.** Even when men speak of their own annihilation, if their ideas are examined closely, it will be found that they still mean and only can mean existence, but existence in a state of darkness, silence, and solitude. Hence it is that no tribe, however so rude, has ever yet been found on the face of the earth without a belief in a future existence; where travellers have fancied they have discovered such, more accurate inquiry has always proved that their opinion was erroneous.† What then, it may be asked, was the great discovery of Christianity? It was at the least that this state is a state of retribution.

“It appears,” says Milton, “indicated in Scripture that every man will rise numerically one and the same person. Otherwise we should not be conformed to Christ, who entered into glory with that identical body of flesh and blood wherewith he had died and risen again.” In this he is, we think, clearly at variance not only with reason and experience, but with St. Paul himself, who only says that the glorified body will originate in some unknown manner from the natural one.

At his coming Christ will judge the world, and “the rule of judgement will be the conscience of each individual, according to the measure of light which he has enjoyed.”

Coincident, as it appears, with the time of this last judgement—I use the indefinite term *time*, as the word *day* is often used to

* Hence the apparent discrepancy between Phil. i. 23, and those places in St. Paul’s Epistles in which he speaks of death as a sleep, may be easily explained: he is speaking thereto of himself, elsewhere of others.

† During the French Revolution, when it was sought to drive the fears of the other world out of the hearts of men, the following inscription was put on the Pantheon: *La mort est un sommeil éternel.* But sleep necessarily includes the idea of waking from it.

denote any given period, and as it is not easily imaginable that so many myriads of men and angels should be assembled and sentenced within a single day—beginning with its commencement and extending a little beyond its conclusion, will take place that glorious reign of Christ on earth with his saints, so often promised in Scripture, even until all his enemies shall be subdued. . . . After the end of the thousand years (*sc.* of this reign), Satan will rage again and assail the Church at the head of an immense confederacy of its enemies;* but will be overthrown by fire from heaven, and condemned to everlasting punishment. After the evil angels and chief enemies of God have been sentenced, judgment will be passed on the whole race of mankind.

Here we plainly have the doctrine of the Millennium, or reign of Christ in glory on earth,—a doctrine which must be received by those who believe in the plenary inspiration of Scripture, unless they renounce all submission to the plain rules of criticism.

Then, it appears, will be pronounced that sentence, “Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.” The passing of this sentence will be followed by its execution, and then will be the end spoken of 1 Cor. xv. 24–28, when Christ is to deliver up the kingdom to God.

It may be asked, if Christ is to deliver up the kingdom to God and the Father, what becomes of the declarations, Heb. i. 8, “Unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever” (*in sæculum sæculi*, for ages of ages); and Dan. vii. 14, “His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed;” Luke i. 33, “Of his kingdom there shall be no end”? I reply, there shall be no end of his kingdom for ages of ages, *i. e.* so long as the ages of the world endure, until *time itself shall be no longer*, Rev. x. 6, until everything which his kingdom was intended to effect shall have been accomplished; insomuch that his kingdom shall not *pass away* as insufficient for its purpose; it will not be *destroyed*,

* “The enemies of the Church are partly heretics and partly profane opponents.”—P. 494.

nor will its period be a period of dissolution, but rather of perfection and consummation, like the end of the Law: Matt. v. 18. In the same manner many things are spoken of as never to pass away, but to remain eternally—as circumcision, Gen. xvii. 13; the ceremonial law in general, Lev. iii. 17, xxiv. 8; (the possession of) the land of Canaan, Gen. xiii. 15, Jer. vii. 7, xxv. 5; the Sabbath, Ex. xxxi. 16; the priesthood of Aaron, Num. xviii. 8; the memorial of stones at the river Jordan, Jos. iv. 7; the signs of heaven, Ps. cxlviii. 6; the earth, Eccl. i. 4;—although every one of these has either already come to an end, or will eventually be terminated.

The second death—so named in reference to the first, or death of the body—or punishment of the damned, “seems to consist partly in the loss of the chief good, namely, the favour and protection of God, and the beatific vision of his presence, which is commonly called the punishment of loss; and partly in eternal torment, which is called the punishment of sense. . . . The intensity and duration of these punishments are variously estimated. . . . Punishment however varies according to the degree of guilt.”

Milton supposes the place of punishment, variously named, he says, Hell, Tophet, hell-fire, outer darkness, a furnace of fire, Hades, a place of torment, the bottomless pit, the lake of fire, the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, to be situated beyond the limits of this universe, *i. e.* the world, according to the Ptolemaic system.

Nor are reasons wanting for this locality. For as the place of the damned is the same as that prepared for the devil and his angels, in punishment of their apostasy,* which occurred before

* Here he is evidently in error, for Gehenna or Hell is always spoken of in the New Testament, not as a place actually existing, but one which was to come into being *after* the general judgement: Matt. v. 22, 29; xviii. 8, 9; xxv. 41; Mark ix. 43–47; Rev. xiv. 10; xx. 10, 15. From these passages we might also suspect that its site would be on the surface of the earth.

the fall of man, it does not seem probable that hell should have been prepared within the limits of this world, in the bowels of the earth, on which the curse had not as yet passed. This is said to have been the opinion of Chrysostom, and likewise of Luther and some later divines. Besides, if, as has been shown from various passages of the New Testament, the whole world is to be finally consumed by fire, it follows that hell, being situated in the centre of the earth, must share the fate of the surrounding universe and perish likewise; a consummation more to be desired than expected by the souls in perdition.

As Milton abstains from asserting that these punishments will be strictly and metaphysically eternal, and has so copiously shown that that is not the sense of the scriptural *for ever* and such-like terms, one may venture to conjecture that he entertained the charitable opinion of the prelates Tillotson and Newton, and of other pious men, that these penalties would only last till they had effected their object in the reformation of the criminals; and that finally, as St. Paul, who seems to have taken this view also, says, *God may be all in all*. Surely it is neither Christian charity nor sound logic to insist that because words possibly *may* bear a particular sense, that they *must* bear it.

Perfect glorification consists in eternal life and perfect happiness, arising chiefly from the divine vision. . . . It appears that all the saints will not attain to an equal state of glory. Its place will be Heaven. It will be accompanied by the renovation of heaven and earth, and of all things therein, adapted to our service or delight, to be possessed by us in perpetuity.

The Second Part of Milton's treatise on the Service of God is, as we have observed, a code of ethics. As it does not contain much that is peculiar, we will only notice his opinions respecting prayer, fasting, oaths, and the observance of the Sabbath.

Supplication is that act whereby, under the guidance of the Holy

Spirit, we reverently ask of God things lawful either for ourselves or others through faith in Christ.

The Lord's Prayer was intended rather as a model of supplication than as a form to be repeated *verbatim* by the Apostles or by Christian churches of the present day. Hence the superfluousness of set forms of worship ; seeing that with Christ for our master and the Holy Spirit for our assistant in prayer, we can have no need of any human aid in either respect.

Prayer may be offered alone or in company. Christ appears seldom to have prayed in conjunction with his disciples, or even in their presence, but either wholly alone or at some distance from them. It is moreover evident that the precepts (Matt. vi.) have reference to private prayer alone. When however he inculcated on his disciples the duty of prayer in general, he gave no specific direction whether they should pray alone or with others. It is certain that they were in the frequent practice of praying in assemblies, and that either individually, each framing within himself his own particular petition relative to some subject on which they had agreed in common (Matt. xviii. 19), or by the mouth of one chosen from their number, who spoke in the name of the rest ; both which modes of prayer appear to have been used indiscriminately by the primitive Christians.

No particular posture is enjoined for prayer. The deportment in it should be suited to the manners of the time. Thus in St. Paul's time men prayed and prophesied [*i.e.* preached] with the head uncovered. Now, on the contrary, since the covering of the head has become a token of authority, and the uncovering of it of submission, it is the custom with most churches, especially those of Europe, in compliance not so much with the letter as with the spirit of the law (which is always to be preferred), to worship God uncovered, as being the mark of reverence prescribed by modern custom ; but to prophesy covered, in token of the authority with which the speaker is invested, and likewise to listen to his instructions covered, as the deportments most emblematic,

"according to modern ideas, of our freedom and maturity as sons of God."

We are even commanded to call down curses on the enemies of God and the Church; as also on false brethren, and on such as are guilty of any grievous offence against God, or even against ourselves. The same may be lawfully done in private prayer, after the example of the holiest of men.

Here again we may observe the unfortunate results of placing the Old and New Testaments on a line, for nearly all his authorities are taken from the former. Surely if, as he maintains, the whole of the Law was abrogated as comparatively imperfect, we should be cautious how we make the conduct of those who lived under it our example. But Milton held all parts—the book of Esther* or the Chronicles, as much as that of Isaiah—to be the immediate dictation of the Holy Spirit, and from this principle he reasoned consequentially. He afterwards, however, qualifies somewhat what he had said of imprecations, by classing among errors those "whereby we invoke God or the devils to destroy any particular person or thing, an intemperance to which even the pious are occasionally liable. . . . Undeserved curses however are of no force, and therefore not to be dreaded."

Prayer is assisted by fasting and vows. Fasting is either private or public, the latter being enjoined by the Church or by the civil power for public reasons. "A religious fast is that whereby a man abstains not so much from eating and drinking, *as from sin*, that he may be able to devote himself more closely to prayer for the obtaining some good or deprecating some evil."

* We meet the following passage in his *Doctrine of Divorce* (ii. 15) : "The same Spirit relates to us the course which the Medes and Persians took by occasion of Vashti."

On the subject of oaths, his decisions are very rational and judicious. He asserts their lawfulness, and that they are to be kept, even contrary to our interest; but in the vexed question of whether an oath extorted by a robber should be observed or not, he decides in the negative, on the strongest grounds. The prohibition (Matt. v. 33) "does not apply to serious subjects, but to our daily conversation, in which nothing can occur of such importance as to be worthy the attestation of God."

Relying, as usual, chiefly on the Old Testament, he sanctions the casting of lots as a means of learning the will of God; but it is not to be used in jest, or with a superstitious or fraudulent purpose.

On the subject of the Sabbath, he reverts to what he had already stated respecting the abrogation of the entire Law, the Decalogue included. He shows that the Sabbath was peculiar to the Israelites, and gives various reasons for its institution. He then argues from Rom. xiv. 5, that no particular day of worship had been appointed in its place, and replies to the arguments of those who deduced the obligation to observe a particular day, from the Fourth Commandment, and some other places of Scripture.

Hence [he says] we arrive at the following conclusions:—first, that under the Gospel no one day is appointed for divine worship in preference to another, except such as the Church may set apart of its own authority for the voluntary assembling of its members, wherein, relinquishing all worldly affairs, we may dedicate ourselves wholly to religious services, as far as is consistent with the duties of charity; and secondly, that this may conveniently take place once every seven days, and particularly on the first day of the week, provided always that it be observed in compliance with the authority of the Church, and not in obedience to the edicts

of the magistrate ; and likewise that a snare be not laid for the conscience by the allegation of a divine commandment, borrowed from the Decalogue ; an error against which Paul diligently cautions us, Col. ii. 16 : “ Let no man therefore judge you,” etc. For if we, under the Gospel, are to regulate the time of our public worship by the prescriptions of the Decalogue, it will surely be far safer to observe the seventh day, according to the express commandment of God, than on the authority of mere human conjecture, to adopt the first. I perceive, also, that several of the best divines, as Bucer, Calvin, Peter Martyr, Musculus, Ursinus, Gomarus, and others, concur in the opinions above expressed.*

To this it may be added, that such also is the opinion of Paley and many other distinguished men in the Church of England. All however seem to be agreed that, both in a social and in a religious view, the devoting of one day in seven to a cessation from worldly toil is a most excellent institution, and one which should never be let go out of use on any account whatever.

* He might have included Luther, who said, “ As for the Sabbath, or Sunday, there is no necessity for its observance ; and if we do so, the reason ought to be, not because Moses commanded it, but because human nature likewise teaches us to give ourselves, from time to time, a day’s rest, in order that man and beast may recruit their strength, and that we may go and hear the word of God preached.”

ON INSPIRATION.

MILTON, as we may see from various passages of his Christian Doctrine and other writings, held that the Holy Spirit aided sincere inquirers after the truth, however unfurnished with human aids to understand the Scriptures, which, in his view, were not to be understood without this aid :

“Those written records pure,
Though not but by the Spirit understood.”

Par. Lost, xii. 513.

But he went still further, and he seems to have believed that the aid of the Spirit was also given to those who sought, especially by writings, to promote the glory of God. Thus, in his Reason of Church Government, he says of himself, “And if any man incline to think I undertake a task too difficult for my years, I trust, *through the supreme enlightening assistance*, far otherwise.” Again, “For public preaching indeed is the *gift of the Spirit*, working as best seems to his secret will.” When, in the same piece, he hints at his design of writing a great poem, he says, that the requisite powers were to be obtained only “by devout prayer to that eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his seraphim with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases.”

Milton's invocation of the Holy Spirit in the commencement of *Paradise Lost* is not therefore to be regarded as a mere form of words. He believed that the Divine Spirit would illuminate the mind of one whose object was to

“Assert eternal Providence,
And justify the ways of God to men.”

In addressing the Divine Light, which he seems to have held to be the same as, or equivalent to, the Spirit, he says—

“So much the rather Thou, celestial Light,
Shine inward, and the mind through all her powers
Irradiate; there plant eyes, all mist from thence
Purge and disperse, that I may see and tell
Of things invisible to mortal sight.”—iii. 51.

And still stronger in the invocation of the Spirit in *Paradise Regained*, where he says—

“Inspire,
As thou art wont, my prompted song, else mute.”

It is therefore not an improbable supposition that Milton regarded his descriptions of Heaven and Hell, and other “things invisible to mortal sight,” as having their foundations in reality, being the secret dictation of the Holy Spirit to his unconscious mind.

Newton tells us that Milton's widow, being asked whether he did not often read Homer and Virgil, she understood it as an imputation on him for stealing from those authors, and answered with eagerness, that “he stole from nobody but the Muse who inspired him.” And being asked by a lady present, who the Muse was, replied, “It was God's grace and the Holy Spirit that visited him nightly.”

ON PHILOSOPHY.

IN astronomy it is, we think, quite clear that Milton, like almost every scholar of his time,* held fast to what is called the Ptolemaic system, which regarded the earth as the centre of the universe. Thus in the Areopagitica we meet the following passage : “Who can discern those planets that are often combust, and those stars of brightest magnitude that rise and set with the sun, until *the opposite motion of their orbs* bring them to such a place in the firmament where they may be seen evening or morning?” We also meet, in the Reason of Church Government, with the following :—“But that our happiness may *orb itself* into a thousand *vagaries* of glory and delight, and with a kind of *eccentrical equation* be, as it were, an *invariable planet* of joy and felicity.” In the following passage, from the Christian Doctrine, we think also that Ptolemaic ideas may be discerned :—“But even if it filled with its presence *the whole circle of the earth*

* “In the middle of the seventeenth century, and long after, there were mathematicians of no small reputation, who struggled staunchly for the immobility of the earth ; and except so far as Cartesian theories might have come in vogue, we have no reason to believe that any persons unacquainted with astronomy, either in this country or on the Continent, had embraced the system of Copernicus. Hume has censured Bacon for rejecting it ; but if Bacon had not done so, he would have anticipated the rest of his countrymen by a full quarter of a century.”—*Hallam, Lit. of Europe*, iii. 192.

with all the heavens, i. e. the entire fabrick of the world, it would not follow that the Spirit is omnipresent." Further, though in one place of *Paradise Lost* (viii. 122 seq.) he notices the Copernican system, and hints the possibility of its truth, yet this was only in accordance with a practice of his, of which we shall speak when we come to treat of that poem ; and the system which is employed as the true one all through it is the Ptolemaic. Finally, the book on astronomy which Milton read with his pupils was *Sacro Bosco, De Sphaera*, with the Commentary of the Jesuit Clavius, in which, as we will show, is to be found every idea and every expression on the subject which occurs in that poem. In truth, with Milton's thraldom to the letter of Scripture, he could not hold any other system. He probably would have said, with Luther, of Copernicus, "This silly fellow wants to upset the old established astronomy ; but according to Scripture, Joshua commanded the sun to stand still, and not the earth." Still we are not to think the less of Milton from not being in advance of most men of genius of his time. Bacon rejected the Copernican system, and Sir Thomas Brown spoke of it with contempt. It is however rather remarkable that Sir William Davenant has adopted it in his poem of *Gondibert* ; its first introduction, we believe, into the realm of the Muses :—

"Man's pride, grown to religion, he abates
By moving our loved earth, which we think fix'd,
Think all to it and it to none relates,
With others' motions scorn to have it mix'd ;
As if it were great and stately to stand still
Whilst other orbs dance on, or else think all
Those vast bright globes, to show God's needless skill,
Were made but to attend our little ball."—ii. 5, 19.

In astrology also Milton seems to have shared the

weakness of those two celebrated men. The only passage however that we have found in his prose works looking that way, is the following in the treatise on Divorce:—"But what might be the cause, whether each one's allotted genius or proper star, or whether the supernal influence of schemes and angular aspects, or this elemental crasis here below,—whether all these, jointly or singly, meeting friendly or unfriendly in either party, I dare not, with the men I am likely to clash, appear so much a philosopher as to conjecture." In *Paradise Lost* we meet—

"All heaven
And happy constellations on that hour
Shed their selectest influence."—viii. 511.

And—

"To the blank moon
Her office they prescribed; to the other five
Their planetary motions and aspects,
In sextile, square, and trine, and opposite,
Of noxious efficacy, and when to join
In synod unbenign; and taught the fix'd
Their influence malignant when to shower,
Which of them rising with the sun, or falling,
Should prove tempestuous."—x. 656.

In *Paradise Regained*, Satan says to our Lord,—

Now contrary, if I read aught in heaven,
Or heaven write aught of fate, by what the stars
Voluminous, or single characters,
In their conjunctions met, give me to spell,
Sorrows and labours, opposition, hate
Attend thee, scorns, reproaches, injuries,
Violence and stripes, and lastly cruel death.
A kingdom they portend thee, but what kingdom,
Real or allegoric, I discern not,
Nor when; eternal sure, as without end,
Without beginning; for no date prefix'd
Directs me, in the starry rubric set.—iv. 379.

The treatise which he wrote on the subject proves Milton's acquaintance with logic ; and the books which he read with his pupils, such as Pitiscus' Trigonometry, show that he had made considerable progress in mathematics. For geography he seems to have had a peculiar predilection. In short, he does not seem to have been ignorant of any of the sciences known at the time. He was probably also well versed in the intricacies of metaphysics. From what we have seen of his views in the Christian Doctrine, and from one remarkable place in *Paradise Lost* (v. 404 *seq.*), it seems quite clear that he held the opinion designated by the dreaded name of *materialism*. But this need inspire no alarm ; the whole is a question of words only. We know not what matter is, we know not what spirit is ; we in fact only know our own sensations and ideas ; and we believe it would be no difficult matter to show that Bishop Berkeley and the Hindú professors of the Vedanta philosophy differ in words only from the grossest materialist, their ideas being of necessity identical.

ON TOLERATION.

IN the year 1673, the year before that of his death, Milton published a treatise on True Religion, Heresy, Schism, Toleration, and what best Means may be used against the Growth of Popery.

Heresy he here defines to be “a religion taken up and believed from the traditions of men, and additions to the Word of God.” Hence it follows that Popery is the only or the greatest heresy in Christendom. The term Roman Catholic is, he says, “a mere contradiction, one of the Pope’s bulls, as if he should say, universal particular, or catholic schismatic.” He refuses to apply the term *heresy* to any portion of the Protestant church, though it may have fallen into schism, *i. e.* division, and therefore consist of sects.

Schism is a rent or division in the Church when it comes to the separating of congregations; and may also happen to a true church as well as to a false; yet, in the true, needs not tend to the breaking of communion, if they can agree in the right administration of that wherein they communicate, keeping their other opinions to themselves, not being destructive to faith. The Pharisees and Sadducees were two sects, yet both met together in their common worship of God at Jerusalem. But here the Papist will angrily demand, What! are Lutherans, Calvinists, Anabaptists, Socinians, no heretics? I answer, all these may have some errors, but are no heretics. Heresy is in the will and choice professedly against Scripture; error is against the will in misunderstanding

the Scripture, after all sincere endeavours to understand it rightly : hence it was said well by one of the ancients, “ Err I may, but a heretic I will not be.” It is a human frailty to err, and no man is infallible here on earth. But so long as all these profess to set the Word of God only before them as the rule of faith and obedience, and use all diligence and sincerity of heart, by reading, by learning, by study, by prayer, for illumination of the Holy Spirit, to understand the rule and obey it,—they have done what man can do ; God will assuredly pardon them, as he did the friends of Job, good and pious men, though much mistaken, as there it appears, in some points of doctrine.

But some will say, With Christians it is otherwise, whom God hath promised by his Spirit to teach all things. True, all things necessary to salvation. But the hottest disputes among Protestants, calmly and charitably inquired into, will be found less than such. The Lutheran holds consubstantiation,* an error indeed, but not mortal. The Calvinist is taxed with predestination, and to make God the author of sin, not with any dishonourable thought of God, but it may be over-zealously asserting his absolute power, not without plea of Scripture. The Anabaptist is accused of denying infants their right to baptism ; again, they say they deny nothing but what Scripture denies them. The Arian and Socinian are charged to dispute against the Trinity ; they affirm to believe the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, according to Scripture and the Apostolic Creed. As for terms of *trinity*, *trinity*, *co-essentiality*, *tripersonality*, and the like, they reject them as scholastic notions, not to be found in Scripture, which, by a general Protestant maxim, is plain and perspicuous abundantly to explain its own meaning in the properest words belonging to so high a matter and so necessary to be known ; a mystery indeed in their sophistick subtleties, but in Scripture a plain doctrine. Their other opinions are of less moment. They dispute the satisfaction of Christ, or rather the word *satisfaction*, as not Scriptural, but they acknowledge him both God and their Saviour. The Arminian, lastly, is condemned for setting up free-will against free-grace, but

* As Milton was probably aware that consubstantiation and transubstantiation only differ in the first syllable, and in reality signify the same, we may perhaps infer that he would have tolerated the latter if it had been, like the former, a mere dogma, and not connected with idolatrous worship.

that imputation he disclaims in all his writings, and grounds himself largely upon Scripture only.

It cannot be denied that the authors or late revivers of all these sects or opinions were learned, worthy, zealous, and religious men, as appears by their lives written; and the same of their many eminent and learned followers, perfect and powerful in the Scriptures, holy and unblamable in their lives. And it cannot be imagined that God would desert such painful and zealous labourers in his Church, and oftentimes great sufferers for their conscience, to damnable errors and a reprobate sense, who had so often implored the assistance of his Spirit; but rather, having made no man infallible, that he hath pardoned their errors, and accepts their pious endeavours, sincerely searching all things, according to the rule of Scripture, with such direction and guidance as they can obtain of God by prayer. What Protestant then, who himself maintains the same principles and disavows all implicit faith, would persecute, and not rather charitably tolerate, such men as these, unless he mean to abjure the principles of his own religion? If it be asked how far they should be tolerated, I answer, Doubtless equally, as being all Protestants,—that is, on all occasions to give an account of their faith, either by arguing, preaching in their several assemblies, public writing, and the freedom of printing. For if the French and Polonian Protestants enjoy all this liberty among Papists, much more may a Protestant justly expect it among Protestants; and yet sometimes here among us the one persecutes the other upon every slight pretence.

As to the heresy of Popery, considering it as a union of political and ecclesiastical usurpation, he “ submits it to the consideration of all magistrates, who are best able to provide for their own and the public safety,” whether it should be tolerated or not, hinting his own opinion that it should not. But viewing it solely in a religious light, as a system of idolatry, he is decided that it should not be tolerated, either publicly or privately. He argues as usual from the Old Testament, and relies on the Second Commandment, though, as we have seen, he held

the Decalogue to have been abolished along with the rest of the Law.

Some years ago such an opinion as this would have been received with scorn or incredulity; but we have lived to see Popery display herself in her true form as the unrelenting foe of truth and liberty. It is however not on account of her idolatry (which is comparatively a venial offence) that Popery is to be abhorred and dreaded, but for her cruel, persecuting spirit. If we look through all the religions of ancient and modern Asia and Europe, Zoroasterism, Brahminism, Buddhism, Mohammedanism, etc., we nowhere find any system so sanguinary as that of the Church of Rome; even the political persecutions of the Roman emperors were trifling in comparison with hers; and her spirit is unchanged and unchangeable,—her clergy are as willing to employ persecution now as in the days of St. Dominic. But her impotence is our security; the spirit of the age is against her, and she struggles, and ever will struggle, in vain, to recover her former power. The educated classes are everywhere opposed to her pretensions, and therefore she may with safety be tolerated. She will also always have votaries and make proselytes, for weak, trifling minds will be caught with her gaudy, theatic ceremonies; the feeble worshipers of antiquity and authority will submit to her pretensions; and, as Milton observes,—

There is no man so wicked but at times his conscience will wring him with thoughts of another world, and the peril of his soul. The trouble and melancholy which he conceives of true repentance and amendment he endures not, but inclines rather to some carnal superstition, which may pacify and lull his conscience with some more pleasing doctrine. None more ready and officious to offer herself than the Romish, and opens wide her

office with all her faculties to receive him: easy confession, easy absolution, pardons, indulgences, masses for him both quick and dead, Agnus Deis, and the like. And he, instead of “working out his salvation with fear and trembling,” straight thinks in his heart—like another kind of fool than he in the Psalms—to bribe God as a corrupt judge, and by his proctor, some priest or friar, to buy out his peace with money, which he cannot with his repentance.

ON GOVERNMENT.

IN politics, Milton was a sincere republican, but his ideal of a republic was far more of an aristocratic than a democratic form.* To monarchy in itself he had no violent objection, and had he seen it as it has appeared in this country since the Revolution, he would probably have acquiesced in it with cheerfulness. But when he looked back on the courts and governments of the two first Stuarts, and turned his view on the actual court of France, he could anticipate nothing but evil from a return to that form of government, and he could discern in Europe no better model than that of the United Provinces, which, with modifications, he recommended to the people of England, in his treatise on “The ready and easy Way to establish a Free Commonwealth, and the

* Milton, we may be sure, would ascribe to our Lord no sentiments but what he regarded as true and just. He makes him express himself as follows in *Paradise Regained* :—

“And what the people but a herd confused,
 A miscellaneous rabble, who extol
 Things vulgar and, well weigh’d, scarce worth the praise ?
 They praise and they admire they know not what,
 And know not whom, but as one leads the other.
 And what delight to be by such extoll’d,
 To live upon their tongues and be their talk !
 Of whom to be dispraised is no small praise,—
 His lot who dare be singularly good.”—iii. 49.

excellence thercof," which he published on the eve of the Restoration.

In this treatise he sums up, and not without somewhat of the spirit of a prophet, the ill results of a return to the ancient line of princes. Having noticed Christ's rebuke of the ambition of the sons of Zebedee, and asserting that it was of civil government only that he spoke, he proceeds as follows :—

And what government comes nearer to this precept of Christ than a free commonwealth? wherein they who are the greatest are perpetual servants and drudges to the public at their own cost and charges; neglect their own affairs, yet are not elevated above their brethren; live soberly in their families, walk the streets as other men, may be spoken to freely, familiarly, friendly, without adoration. Whereas a king must be adored like a demigod, with a dissolute and haughty court about him, of vast expense and luxury; masks and revels, to the debauching of our prime gentry, both male and female, not in their pastimes only, but in earnest, by the loose employments of court-service, which will be then thought honourable. There will be a queen of no less charge—in most likelihood outlandish and a Papist—besides a queen-mother already, together with both their courts and numerous train: then a royal issue, and ere long severally their sumptuous courts; to the multiplying of a servile crew, not of servants only, but of nobility and gentry, bred up then to the hopes, not of public but of court-offices, to be stewards, chamberlains, ushers, grooms even of the close-stool: and the lower their minds, debased with court-opinions contrary to all virtue and reformation, the haughtier will be their pride and profuseness. We may well remember this not long since at home, nor need but look at present into the French court, where enticements and preferments daily draw away and pervert the Protestant nobility.

As to the burden of expense, to our cost we shall soon know it, for any good to us deserving to be termed no better than the vast and lavish price of our subjection and their debauchery, which we are now so greedily cheapening, and would so fain be paying most inconsiderately to a single person, who, for anything wherein the public really needs him, will have little else to do but

to bestow the eating and drinking of excessive dainties, to set a pompous lace upon the superficial actings of state, to pageant himself up and down in progress* among the perpetual bowings and cringings of an abject people, on either side deifying and adoring him for nothing done that can deserve it.

Instead of placing power thus in the hands of a single person, for which, he says—not perhaps without an eye to Cromwell—men have smarted so oft, Milton would have it deposited in those of “a general council of ablest men, chosen by the people, to consult of public affairs from time to time for the common good.”

In this grand council must the sovereignty, not transferred, but delegated only, and, as it were, deposited, reside; with this caution, they must have the forces by sea and land committed to them, for preservation of the common peace and liberty; must raise and manage the public revenue, at least with some inspectors, deputed for satisfaction of the people how it is employed; must make or propose civil laws, treat of commerce, peace, or war, with foreign nations, and—for the carrying on some particular affairs with more secrecy and expedition—must elect (as they have already†), out of their own number and others, a council of state.

It seems rather extraordinary that, after the experience of the Long Parliament, Milton should propose this council to be perpetual. But he proceeds thus:—

And although it may seem strange at first hearing—by reason that men’s minds are prepossessed with the notion of successive parliaments—I affirm that the grand or general council, being

* These royal progresses, or rounds of visits to the houses of the nobility, had prevailed chiefly in the reign of Elizabeth.

† *Sc.* elected. This omission of the participle was not unusual with our old writers, and, in our opinion, it is not to be disapproved of. “But I have, and do reverence him, for the greatness that was only proper to himself,” says Ben Jonson of Bacon.

“More than my own; that am, have, and will be.”—Hen. VIII. iii. 2.

well chosen, should be perpetual; for so their business is or may be and oftentimes urgent, the opportunity of affairs gained or lost in a moment. The day of council cannot be set, as the day of a festival, but must be ready always to prevent* or answer all occasions. By this continuance they will become every way skilfullest, best provided of intelligence from abroad, best acquainted with the people at home and the people with them. The ship of the commonwealth is always under sail; they sit at the stern, and if they steer well, what need is there to change them, it being rather dangerous? Add to this, that the grand council is both foundation and main pillar of the whole State; and to move pillars and foundations, not faulty, cannot be safe for the building.

I see not, therefore, how we can be advantaged by successive and transitory parliaments; but that they are much likelier continually to unsettle rather than to settle a free government, to breed commotions, changes, novelties, and uncertainties; to bring neglect upon present affairs and opportunities, while all minds are in suspense with expectation of a new assembly, and the assembly, for a good space, taken up with the new settling of itself. After which, if they find no great work to do, they will make it, by altering or repealing former acts, or making and multiplying new, that they may seem to see what their predecessors saw not, and not to have assembled for nothing, till all law be lost in the multitude of clashing statutes. But if the ambition of such as think themselves injured that they also partake not of the government, and are impatient till they be chosen, cannot brook the perpetuity of others chosen before them, or if it be feared that long continuance of power may corrupt sincerest men, the known expedient is, and by some lately propounded, that annually—or if the space be longer, so much perhaps the better—the third part of senators may go out according to the precedence of their election, and the like number be chosen in their places, to prevent their settling of too absolute a power, if it should be perpetual; and this they call *partial rotation*.

His chief objection to this plan is, that in this way the best and ablest men might have to retire, and be replaced by those who were raw and inexperienced, or

* *I. e.* Anticipate, a usual sense of *prevent* at that time.

ill-affected. He does not seem ever to have thought of obviating this inconvenience, by making the retiring senators capable of re-election. As to the council's "settling of too absolute a power," he thinks there is little danger of it while the people have arms in their hands. He is entirely opposed to a popular assembly in conjunction with the grand council, showing from history its inadequacy for the conservation of liberty. Neither would he have the members of the council chosen immediately by the popular vote. "Another way," he says, "will be to well qualify and refine elections: not committing all to the noise and shouting of a rude multitude, but permitting only those of them who are rightly qualified to nominate as many as they will; and out of that number, others of a better breeding to choose a less number more judiciously; till, after a third or fourth sifting and refining of exactest choice, they only be left chosen who are the due number, and seem by most voices the worthiest."

But the grand council should not be the sole depository of political power. Having spoken of liberty of conscience, which should be unlimited, he adds:—

The other part of our freedom consists in the civil rights and advancements of every person according to his merit: the enjoyment of those never more certain, and the access to them never more open, than in a free commonwealth. Both which, in my opinion, may be best and soonest obtained if every county in the land were made a kind of subordinate commonalty or commonwealth, and one chief town or more, according as the shire is in circuit, made cities, if they be not called so already, where the nobility and chief gentry, from a proportionable compass annexed to each city, may build houses or palaces befitting their quality, may bear part in the government, make their own judicial laws, or use those that are, and execute them by their own elected judicatures and judges, without appeal, in all things of civil

government between man and man. So they shall have justice in their own hands, law executed fully and finally in their own counties and precincts—long wished and spoken of, but never yet obtained. They shall have none then to blame but themselves if it be not well administered, and fewer laws to expect from the supreme authority; or to those that shall be made, of any great concernment to public liberty, they may without much trouble—in these commonalties, or in more general assemblies, called to their cities from the whole territory on such occasion—declare and publish their assent or dissent by deputies, within a time limited, sent to the grand council; yet so as this their judgement declared shall submit to the greater number of other counties or commonalties, and not avail them to any exemption of themselves, or refusal of agreement with the rest, as it may in any of the United Provinces, being sovereign within itself, to the great disadvantage of that Union.

Controversies between men of different counties might be decided at the capital city, or any more commodious place, by indifferent judges.

In these cities they should also have “schools and academies at their own choice, wherein their children may be bred up in their own sight to all learning and noble education—not in grammar only, but in all liberal acts and exercises.” But this, he says,

Monarchs never will permit; whose aim is to make the people wealthy indeed perhaps and well-fleeced, for their own shearing and the supply of regal prodigality; but otherwise softest, basest, viciousest, servilest, easiest to be kept under; and, not only in fleece, but in mind also, sheepishest. And will have all the benches of judicature annexed to the throne as a gift of royal grace, that we have justice done us; whereas nothing can be more essential to the freedom of a people than to have the administration of justice, and all public ornaments, in their own election, and within their own bounds, without long travelling or depending upon remote places to obtain their right or any civil accomplishment, so it be not supreme, but subordinate to the general power and union of the whole republic.

Such were the views of Milton as to the best form of government for England, formed in total ignorance of the character of the English people, the most attached to ancient usages and precedents, and the least inclined to depart from them, of any people in Europe. We need hardly say, then, that his plan was impracticable under any circumstances.

ON EDUCATION.

IN his celebrated treatise addressed to his friend Hartlib, Milton gives his ideas on the best mode of education for the “noble and gentle youth” of England, between the ages of twelve and twenty-one years.

He proposes that a house and grounds should be selected capable of lodging commodiously a hundred and fifty persons; to be both school and university. Of these about twenty should be attendants, the remainder teachers and students; the whole to be under the direction of one “of desert sufficient and ability either to do all, or wisely to direct and oversee it done.”

With respect to their studies, they should first be taught the chief and necessary rules of the Latin grammar, which language they should be made to pronounce as near the Italian manner as possible, especially in the vowels; “for we Englishmen,” he says, “being far northerly, do not open our mouths in the cold air wide enough to grace a southern tongue, but are observed by all other nations to speak exceeding close and inward; so that to smatter Latin with an English mouth is as ill a hearing as law French.” He would then have read to them some “easy and delightful book of education;” but though there is plenty of such in Greek, he can point out nothing of the kind in Latin, except the first books of Quintilian.

But here the main skill and groundwork will be, to temper them such lectures and explanations upon every opportunity as may lead and draw them in willing obedience, inflamed with the study of learning and the admiration of virtue, stirred up with high hopes of living to be brave men and worthy patriots, dear to God, and famous to all ages; that they may despise and scorn all their childish and ill-taught qualities, to delight in manly and liberal exercises, which he who hath the art and proper eloquence to catch* them with—what with mild and effectual persuasions, and what with the intimation of some fear, if need be, but chiefly by his own example—might, in a short space, gain them to an incredible diligence and courage, infusing into their young breasts such an ingenuous and noble ardour as would not fail to make many of them renowned and matchless men.

During this period they might be taught arithmetic and the elements of geometry, “even playing.” Between supper and bed-time they might be instructed in the easy grounds of religion and the Scripture history.

They are then to be put to read the agricultural writers, Cato, Varro, Columella; for even if the language be difficult, it is not a difficulty above their years. Hence, he infers, they will learn how to cultivate and improve the soil of their country. Before they are half through these authors, he thinks they must be masters

* *I. e.* Imbue, affect, or infect. We still use it, but in rather a passive sense, as when we say, “he had caught a fever.” *Catch* is, we think, a corruption of *latch*, from A. S. *gelæccan*, perl. *gelæhte*, whence *caught*, while if it came from *capio*, it would be *catched*. In Macbeth (iv. 3) we meet with *latch* in the sense of *catch*, and we have the *latch* of a door, the *latchet* of a shoe. We would therefore read *latched* for *lapsed*, in

“For which if I be *lapsed* in this place.”—Twelfth Night, iii. 3; and in—

“But hast thou yet *latched* the Athenian’s eyes
With the love-juice, as I did bid thee do?”

Mid. Night’s Dream, iii. 2.

We would understand *latch* as *catch* in this place of Milton. We may observe that *take* is used in a somewhat similar manner. “No fairy *takes*” “a fruit that with the frost is *taken*.”—Surrey.

of any ordinary Latin prose. They may now also learn the use of the globes in some modern author, and all the maps, “first with the old names and then with the new ;” or they might be able to read some compendious method of natural philosophy. They might at this time also commence Greek, in the same manner as the Latin, first reading the historical physiology of Aristotle and Theophrastus. To these they can add Vitruvius, Seneca’s Natural Questions, Mela, Celsus, Pliny, or Solinus, and then “they may descend in mathematics to the instrumental science of trigonometry, and from thence to fortification, architecture, enginery, or navigation ; and in natural philosophy, they may proceed leisurely from the history of meteors, minerals, plants, and living creatures, as far as anatomy.”

Then also might be read to them, “out of some not tedious writer,” the institutions of physic ; as this may be of use to a man’s self and to his friends, and even enable him, at times, to save an army from wasting away by disease. In these various studies, they may obtain,—some for pay, some for favour,—the aid and instruction of hunters, shepherds, gardeners, architects, mariners, anatomists, etc. “Then also those poets which are now counted most hard will be both facile and pleasant,—Orpheus, Hesiod, Theocritus, Aratus, Nicander, Oppian, Dionysius ; and in Latin, Lucretius, Manilius, and the rural parts of Virgil.”

They may now commence the study of ethics, reading for that purpose the moral works of Plato, Xenophon, Cicero, Plutarch, Laertius, etc.; but always closing the day’s work “under the determinate sentence of David or Solomon, or the Evangelists and Apostolic Scriptures.” At odd hours, during this or the preceding period, they

may have acquired the Italian tongue. “And soon after, but with wariness and good antidote, it would be wholesome enough to let them taste some choice comedies,—Greek, Latin, or Italian; those tragedies also that treat of household matters, as *Trachiniæ*, *Alcestis*, and the like.”

He would next have them instructed in politics, “that they may not, in a dangerous fit of the commonwealth, be such poor, shaken, uncertain reeds, of such a tottering conscience, as many of our great counsellors have lately shown themselves, but steadfast pillars of the State. Then they should study the grounds of law and legal justice in the law of Moses, the remains of the Greek lawgivers, that of the Romans down to Justinian, and so down to the Saxon and Common Law of England and the Statutes.”

The Sundays now, and the evenings, may be devoted to the highest matters of theology and Church history, and by this time they may have acquired the Hebrew tongue; “whereto,” he says, “it would be no impossibility to add the Chaldee and the Syrian dialect.”

When all these employments are well conquered, then will the choice historians, heroic poems, and Attic tragedies of stateliest and most regal argument, with all the famous political orations, offer themselves; which if they were not merely read, but some of them got by memory and solemnly pronounced with right accent and grace, as might be taught, would endue them even with the spirit and vigour of Demosthenes or Cicero, Euripides or Sophocles.

The time is now come for teaching them logic and rhetoric, and the art of criticism, as developed in the works of Aristotle and Horace, and by Castelvetro, Tasso, Mazzoni, and others, among the Italians, which “teaches what the laws are of a true epic poem; what of a dra-

matic, what of a lyric, what decorum is, which is the grand masterpiece to observe . . . and show them what religious, what glorious and magnificent use might be made of poetry, both in Divine and human things."

From hence, and not till now, will be the right season of forming them to be able writers and composers in every excellent matter, when they shall be thus fraught with a universal insight into things; or whether they be to speak in parliament or council, honour and attention would be waiting on their lips. There would then also appear in pulpits other visages, other gestures, and stuff otherwise wrought than what we now sit under; oftentimes to as great a trial of our patience, as any other that they preach to us. These are the studies wherein our noble and our gentle youth ought to bestow their time in a disciplinary way from twelve to one-and-twenty; unless they rely more upon their ancestors, dead, than upon themselves, living: in which methodical course, it is so supposed, they must proceed by the steady pace of learning onward; as at convenient times, for memory's sake, to retire back into the middle ward, and sometimes into the rear, of what they have been taught, until they have confirmed and solidly united the whole body of their perfected knowledge, like the embattling of a Roman legion.

They should be allowed an hour and a half before dinner, at noon, for exercise, and due rest after; but the time for this might be enlarged, as they rose earlier or later in the morning, *i.e.* according to the time of the year.

The exercise which I commend first, is the exact use of their weapon, to guard and to strike safely with edge or point. This will keep them healthy, nimble, strong, and well in health; is also the likeliest means to make them grow large and tall, and to inspire them with a gallant and fearless courage, which, being tempered with seasonable lectures and precepts to them of true fortitude and patience, will turn into a native and heroic valour, and make them hate the cowardice of doing wrong. They must be also practised in all the locks and gripes of wrestling,—wherein Englishmen were wont to excel,—as need may often be in fight to tug,

to grapple, and to close. And this perhaps will be enough, wherein to heat and prove their single strength.

The interim of unsweating themselves regularly, and convenient rest before meat, may both with profit and delight be taken up in recreating and composing their travailed spirits with the solemn and divine harmonies of music heard or learned; either whilst the skilful organist plies his grave and fancied descent in lofty fugues,* or the whole symphony, with artful and unimaginable touches, adorn and grace the well-studied chords of some choice composer; sometimes the lute or soft organ-stop waiting on elegant voices, either to religious, martial, or civil ditties, which—if wise men and prophets be not extremely out—have a great power over dispositions and manners, to smooth and make them gentle from rustic harshness and distempered passions. The like, also, would not be inexpedient after meat, to assist and cherish nature in her first concoction, and send their minds back to study in good tune and satisfaction; where, having followed it close under vigilant eyes till about two hours before supper, they are by a sudden alarum or watchword to be called out to their military motions, under sky or covert, according to the season, as was the Roman wont: first on foot, then, as their age permits, on horseback, to all the art of cavalry—that having in sport, but with much exactness and daily muster, served out the rudiments of their soldiership, in all the skill of embattling, marching, encamping, fortifying, besieging, and battering, with all the helps of ancient and modern stratagems, tactics, and warlike maxims, they may, as it were out of a long war, come forth renowned and perfect commanders in the service of their country. They would not then, if they were trusted with fair and hopeful armies, suffer them, for want of just and wise discipline, to shed away from about them like sick feathers, though they be never so oft supplied; they would not suffer their empty and unrecruitable colonels of twenty men in a company to quaff out or convey into secret hoards the wages of a delusive list and a miserable remnant, yet in the meanwhile to be overmastered with a score or two of drunkards, the only soldiery left about them, or else to comply with all rapines and violences. No, certainly, if they

* *Descent* is what we term variation. “*A fugue*,” says Hume (on Par. Lost, xi. 563), “is in music the correspondence of parts answering one another in the same notes, either above or below.”

know aught of that knowledge that belongs to good men, or good governors, they would not suffer these things.*

But to return to our own institute. Besides these constant exercises at home, there is another opportunity of gaining experience, to be won from pleasure itself abroad. In those vernal seasons of the year, when the air is calm and pleasant, it were an injury and a sullenness against nature not to go out and see her riches, and partake in her rejoicing with heaven and earth. I should not, therefore, be a persuader to them of studying much then, after two years that they have well laid their grounds,† but to ride out in companies, with prudent and staid guides, to all the quarters of the land, learning and observing all places of strength, all commodities of building and of soil for towns and tillage, harbours and ports for trade; sometimes taking sea as far as to our navy, to learn there also what they can in the practical knowledge of sailing and of sea-fight.

These ways would try all their peculiar gifts of nature; and if there were any secret excellency among them would fetch it out, and give it fair opportunities to advance itself by, which could not but mightily redound to the good of this nation, and bring into fashion again those old admired virtues‡ and excellencies, with far more advantage now in the purity of Christian knowledge. Nor shall we then need the Monsieurs of Paris to take our hopeful youth into their slight and prodigal custodies, and send them over back again transformed into mimics, apes, and kickshaws. But if they desire to see other countries at three or four and twenty years of age, not to learn principles, but to enlarge experience and make wise observations, they will by that time be such as shall deserve the regard and honour of all men where they pass, and the society and friendship of those who are best and most eminent.§ And perhaps then other nations will be glad to visit us for their breeding, or else to imitate us in their own country.

We have always regarded this treatise of Milton's as

* In all this he alludes to the troops of the Parliament, before the New Model.

† *I. e.* Foundation.

‡ *I. e.* Those of the Greeks and Romans.

§ He here probably has his own case in view.

a singular instance of how even the greatest of minds will allow themselves to be beguiled by their imagination. There could not have been found at that time in England, there could not be found even at the present day, when it is so much more populous, even one hundred persons capable of acquiring, between the ages of twelve and twenty-one, anything approaching to the quantity of various knowledge here supposed ; nay, Milton himself never possessed it at any period of his life. Surely his experience in teaching might have shown him that what he proposed was little short of impossibility, in the present condition of human nature, a condition not likely ever to be essentially altered. A limit is set to our acquisitions, and he who seeks to be acquainted with too many things, will find himself in the end having little real knowledge of any. Most fortunate, too, for the world, we may add, was it, that Milton himself was, as he informs us, educated on a different system, and his splendid imagination allowed to attain its full development.

There are some things however in this system worthy of attention and of adoption. Thus, as he would not commence even with Latin grammar till after the age of twelve, it is plain that he was no friend to the forcing system, or that of trying to make infant prodigies ; but still we think that classical education may with safety begin at a much earlier age, as indeed he did begin it himself in the case of his nephews. We quite approve of his plan of teaching a more correct mode of pronouncing Latin, but of that we shall speak when we come to notice his own Latin writings. We also approve of his deferring the practice of literary composition till the time when the mind would have been well furnished with

ideas. It would also appear from what he says on the subject, that the compositions should be altogether or chiefly in the vernacular language,—of the culture of which however he nowhere speaks; but it is hard to believe that at that time Latin composition, at least in prose, should have been neglected. We much doubt however if he would have included verse-making,—a practice which must be offensive to every true poet. Lastly, he is to be commended for including science as well as literature in his course of studies,—a matter too much neglected at many of our schools. He makes, as we may observe, the same mistake here as in his own teaching, by commencing with the cultivation of the reason, rather than the imagination; but perhaps he may have thought that before the age of twelve that faculty would have been sufficiently developed by works in the mother tongue. We cannot conclude without expressing our approval of the regard shown to religion in this system of education.

MILTON'S LEARNING.

THE present seems to be the most suitable place for making some observations with respect to the extent of this great poet's learning, concerning which opinions seem to be somewhat vague and indefinite.

In Greek and Latin there was probably not a single author that he had not read. He appears to have been quite familiar with Plato while he was at Cambridge; and from two places of Comus we may infer, that while at Horton, if not before, he had read Athenæus and Tzetzes' comment on Lycophron.* We have also seen† his own assertion, that he carried his studies of the writers of these languages down into the Middle Ages. Beside Homer, it is inferred—chiefly, we believe, from the circumstance of his copy, with his marginal annotations, being in existence—that Euripides was his great favourite; but this inference is not borne out by a perusal of his writings, which would rather lead to the conclusion that Aeschylus and Sophocles stood higher in his favour. In Latin there can be little doubt but that he had a great partiality for Ovid,—and who with poetic feeling has not?—for in his *Prolusions* he styles him,

* *Comus*, v. 95 seq. (see our *Mythol. of Greece and Italy*, p. 48, third edit.) and v. 879 seq. (*ibid.* p. 240). Mr. Mitford says, that Lord Charlemont possessed Milton's *Lycophron*, with some of his critical remarks.

† Above, page 10.

“poetarum elegantissimus ;” and his daughter Deborah said that Ovid was, with Isaiah and Homer, the book she and her sister were most frequently called on to read to their father.

It is probable that Milton learned Hebrew in his boyhood ; we have seen* that he was familiar with it when he went to Cambridge. He also, as we learn from Phillips, acquired, we know not at what time, but most probably when he was studying with a view to taking orders, the Rabbinical Hebrew and the Syriac ; but we have no means of ascertaining how far his studies in the writings of the Rabbin proceeded. We have not met with any certain traces of such learning in his poems ; but the following passage in his *Doctrine of Divorce* (ii. 18) would seem to indicate something more than a mere superficial acquaintance with them. Speaking of the passage in *Judges*, where the Levite's wife is said to have played the whore against him, he adds, “which Josephus and the Septuagint, with the Chaldean, interpret only of stubbornness and rebellion against her husband ; *and to this I add*, that Kimchi, and the two other Rabbies, who gloss the text, are in the same opinion.” We feel sure that he would never have expressed himself in this manner if he were only relating at second-hand.

There can be no doubt but that Milton's knowledge of the Italian writers was both extensive and accurate. Mr. Mitford informs us, that he had seen a copy of the *Sonetti* of Varchi, which had belonged to him, “in

* See above, p. 6. One of our most distinguished men of science was taught Hebrew, actually in his childhood, by his uncle, who educated him. When we first knew him he was about nine years old, and he could then read and translate the Hebrew Psalter wherever it was opened. We remember him at the same time learning fifty lines of the *Ilias*, with only the aid of a lexicon, in about half an hour.

which," he says, "the most curious expressions, and the most poetical passages, were underlined and marked with extraordinary care." Of his knowledge of French and Spanish we are informed by others rather than by himself, for he never makes any allusion to any writers in these languages, except in his notice of 'The Verse prefixed to Paradise Lost, where he says, "Some, both Italian and Spanish poets, have rejected rime;" in which, as we will show hereafter, he probably alluded to Boscan and Jauragui, which writers of course he must have read. It is, in our opinion, hardly possible that he was not acquainted with Cervantes and with Rabelais, Marot, and Montaigne.

As Milton in his History of England makes frequent reference to the Saxon Chronicle, we may perhaps venture to infer that he had some knowledge of the Anglo-Saxon language. He was also well read in the various Latin Annals and Chronicles in which the events of English history had been registered.

We need hardly say that his acquaintance with the writers in his own language was most extensive. In the Apology for Smectymnuus, he alludes to the Vision and Creed of Pierce Plowman, in a way which proves that he must have read them. In the same piece he quotes a passage, of some length, from old Gower, and he often quotes or refers to Chaucer. His admiration for Shakespeare is well known; and Dryden says that "he acknowledged to him that Spenser was his original," which of course can only mean that this was the English poet in whom he took most delight, and whom he studied most; for every man's style is his own, a part of his being. It is rather strange that Cowley should be said to have been one of his favourites; but in literature, as

in love, we often prefer our opposites. One of the most money-loving men we ever knew, was devotedly fond—of Horace !

Milton, as is well known, has references in both his prose and poetry to books of chivalry, and he once meditated a poem on the subject of Arthur. Hence his biographers in general have taken occasion to assert that he was deeply read in the old romances of the cycles of Arthur and Charlemagne, and of the Amadises, Palmerins, and others of Spain. We doubt however if his reading was so extensive ; at least it is not proved by the following passage of the Apology for Smectymnuus, on which the critics seem to rest.

I betook me among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood, founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown all over Christendom. There I read it in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood the honour and chastity of virgin or matron.

We may observe that Milton, who never uses his words at random, employs that of *cantos* in speaking of these romances ; from which it is quite evident that it was poems he had chiefly in view, and these could only be the Orlando Innamorato and Furioso, and the Faerie Queen—more especially this last, and possibly the Amadigi and some others of the romantic poems of Italy. The only prose romance that it appears certain that he read, was the Mort d'Arthur ; for there is an evident reference to it in Paradise Regained, and which proves what an enduring impression it had made on his memory.* It has however never, we believe, been observed

* In one of his Academic Prolusions we meet the following passage : "Nec validissimi illi regis Arthorii pugiles *igniti et flammigerantis castelli incantimenta* vicerunt facilius et dissiparunt." We cannot tell

that he seems also to have read in his early days another English romance, namely, the Seven Champions of Christendom; for the following passage in *The Reason of Church Government*, seems derived from that romance, rather than from the last cantos of the *Legend of Holiness in the Faerie Queen*.

More like that huge dragon of Egypt, breathing out waste and desolation to the land, unless he were daily fattened with virgin's blood.* Him our old patron St. George by his matchless valour slew, as the Prelate of the Garter that reads his collect can tell. And if our princes and knights will imitate the fame of that old champion, as by their order of knighthood solemnly taken they vow, far be it that they should uphold and side with this English dragon; but rather, to do as indeed their oaths bind them, they should make it their knightly adventure to pursue and vanquish this mighty sail-winged† monster that menaces to swallow up the land, unless her bottomless gorge may be satisfied with the blood of the King's daughter, the Church; and may, as she was wont, fill her dark and infamous den with the bones of the saints.

where he got this; for we recollect nothing of the kind in the *Mort d'Arthur*, and we have not the book in our possession.

* "If he be not every day appeased with the body of a true virgin."
—*Seven Champions*.

† His flaggy wings, when forth he did display,
Were like two sails.—*F. Q. i. 11, 10.*

PART III.

WRITINGS OF MILTON.

WRITINGS OF MILTON.



I.

VERSE.

THE Writings of Milton are now to come under consideration. These are both in English and in Latin : of the former we will treat in some detail, while on the latter we will content ourselves with making merely a few observations. As we have no English prose of Milton's of so early a date as the greater part of his poetry anterior to *Paradise Lost*, we will commence with an account of his earlier poems.

In treating of Milton's poetry, we will not venture, in imitation of Johnson and others, to erect ourselves into critics and sit in judgement on it, pronouncing authoritatively on the merits and demerits of the pieces that come under consideration. For this purpose a mind nearly equal to the poet's own would be required ; and few, we apprehend, can lay claim with justice to a possession of such eminence. For our own part, we frankly declare that, conscious of our immense inferiority to the poet in mental power, we would not presume to sit in judgement on what bears the stamp of his own approval ; for it should always be remembered that these poems were

not—as is but too much the case nowadays—given to the world immediately after they had been composed, but were, for the most part, retained in the poet's desk for many years, and were not published till the time when his judgement was in its full maturity and vigour. In our eyes they are, we may say, all beauty and perfection, bating that compliance with the false taste of the age, to be discerned in some of the earlier pieces, but from which he speedily emancipated himself. The other apparent faults all vanish when we obey that primary but too often neglected law of criticism, of placing ourselves, as far as possible, in the position of the poet, and bring to our mind the opinions that prevailed, and the meaning that words bore in his time. All then that we propose to do is to offer such illustrations of the various pieces as will enable the reader to enter into their meaning, and enjoy their manifold beauties. The explanation of particular terms and passages must of course be reserved for the annotations on the respective poems. We will here notice them in the order in which they appear to have been written.

PARAPHRASES OF PSALMS CXIV. AND CXXXVI.

These paraphrases, as the poet himself informs us, were executed “at fifteen years old,” *i. e.* in his sixteenth year, and therefore while he was at St. Paul’s School. The versification is vigorous and elegant, and the ideas which he has introduced are correct and poetical. Warton has noticed with praise the expressions, “the *golden-tressed sun*,” “God’s *thunder-clasping hand*,” and “*above the reach of mortal eye*.” At a subsequent period, namely while residing at Horton, Milton translated the former of these psalms also into Greek.

ON THE DEATH OF A FAIR INFANT,
DYING OF A COUGH.

This ode, Milton's earliest attempt at original poetic composition, as far as is known to us, was written in the winter of 1625, about the time that he had completed his seventeenth year. The occasion was the death of an infant daughter (see the last stanza) of his sister Mrs. Phillips, born probably in the preceding autumn, and who died, as it would appear, of the hooping-cough. It is very remarkable that this beautiful poem was not included in the collection of his verses which he published in 1645. That this was not owing to its want of merit in the eyes of its parent is manifest, for it appeared in the edition of 1673—nearly half a century after it had been composed. We do not suspect that this originated in an over-rigorous adherence to the rule *Nonumque prematur in annum*; the probability is that he had given his sister the only copy he had made of it, and that he did not recollect it when he was preparing his poems for publication.

In this juvenile production, we meet with that mixture of classic mythology with Christian ideas which prevailed all over Europe till late in the eighteenth century, and which is not yet quite gone out of use in the poetry of the South. It probably originated with Dante and his contemporaries in their attacks on the Church of Rome, in symbol and allegory; and as the gods of Greece and Rome came very generally to be regarded as personifications, the practice was far less absurd than it might appear to be on a superficial view. Besides, the constant study of the Classics in those times gave a reality in the minds of readers to everything that they contained, of

which we cannot in these days form an adequate conception ; but without which, we must be unable to enter fully into the spirit and enjoy the beauties of those poets who wrote under the influence of such feelings and sentiments. The most remarkable instance, we may here observe, of this confusion of heathen and Christian ideas, is that beautiful poem the Lusiadas, in which, though the author assures us that he uses the deities of classic mythology only in a figurative and allegoric sense, still, when we do our utmost to place ourselves in his condition, and regard them with complacency, we find success almost unattainable.

Milton commences by representing the subject of his verse under the figure of a flower, and he supposes that Winter, envious of the success of Aquilo (*i. e.* Boreas), his charioteer, in carrying off Orithyia, resolved to purvey himself a wife in like fashion. Mounting then his “icy-pearled” car, he wandered through the air till he espied this fair one ; but unaware of the effect of his “cold, kind” embrace, he “unhoused her virgin soul from her fair biding-place.” The poet consoles her by recalling to mind the parallel fate of Hyacinthus ; but he cannot persuade himself that she is really dead, and he prays her to inform him whether she has become a dweller of the Empyrean or of the Elysian Fields, and what was the cause of her so speedy departure. He asks if she was a star fallen from the sky, which Jove had restored to its place, or a goddess who had fled to conceal herself on earth during a late attack of “Earth’s sons” on the “sheeny Heaven ;” was she Astræa, or Mercy, “that sweet-smiling youth,” or the matron “white-robed” Truth, or any other of “that heavenly brood,” or finally, one of the “gold-winged” host of angels come down to

show to mankind “what creatures heaven doth breed”? In the close, he consoles the mother for her loss, and assures her, that if she bears it patiently, God will give her another offspring, that will make her name live “till the world’s last end”—an assurance verified at least by this poem.

The language of this ode is exquisitely poetic, and the imagery and sentiments give evidence of the first faint dawn of the *Paradise Lost*. The measure is the poet’s own formation; for, adopting the seven-lined stanza used by Chaucer in his *Troilus and Cressida* and some of his other poems, and by Sackville in his *Induction to the Mirror of Magistrates*, he changed the last line from the original form of five feet to one of six feet, as in the Spenserian stanza. It is very remarkable that the very same thing was done by Phineas Fletcher in his *Purple Island*; and, as this poem was not published till 1633, it is quite evident that Milton could not have imitated the structure of its verse.*

In the edition of 1673 the eighth stanza is printed in the following manner:—

“ Or wert thou that just Maid who once before
Forsook the hated earth, O ! tell me sooth,
And cam’st again to visit us once more ?
Or wert thou that sweet-smiling Youth !
Or that cown’d Matron sage, white-robed truth ?
Or any other of that heav’ly brood
Let down in cloudie throne to do the world some good ?”

It will be seen at once that the fourth line is short by a foot, and it can hardly be doubted that the missing word is *Mercy*, which we have no hesitation in restoring to the text, though Warton was more scrupulous, when it was suggested to him by a gentleman named Heskin;

* There is however a difference, for in Fletcher’s stanza the last three lines form a triplet.

for in the Ode on the Nativity (st. xv.), Truth, Justice, and Mercy are placed together, and the last, as here, occupies the middle station; Mercy and Truth are also associated in the Scriptures, see Ps. xxv. 10, Prov. xxvi. 6. The error may have originated in the following manner. The compositor omitted Mercy, and as Justice is merely called “that just maid,” and “truth,” in this edition, begins with a small letter, the person who read the proof—for it is hardly possible it could have been read to Milton himself—may have supposed that “sweet-smiling youth” was the whole, his eye not noting the measure.

The additional poems in this edition—which otherwise follows that of 1645 even in its errors of punctuation—do not seem to have been read with any care; for in the very next line, we may observe that *crowned* is printed *cowned*. We may see by this, as we will show more fully hereafter, how little value should be attached to the phrase “the author’s own edition.”

The reader may perhaps feel a curiosity to know why Milton should have made Mercy a youth, while Truth and Justice are females. The reason probably is, that the young poet may have observed that *mercy* in Hebrew is a masculine, while *truth* is a feminine noun, and he thence thought they should be thus personified. He may also have had in view the eighty-fifth Psalm, where it is said, “Mercy and truth are met together, righteousness and peace have kissed,” and have forgotten that it is the masculine, not the feminine, form of the word expressing *righteousness* that is used.

AT A VACATION EXERCISE, ETC.

These verses, though written in the poet’s twentieth year (*anno ætatis xix.*), *i. e.* in 1628, were not printed

till 1673, the copy probably having gone astray at the time he was first publishing his collected poems. In the edition of 1673 it was printed, the last but one of the original poems; but in the *errata*, directions are given to place it immediately after the verses on the Death of a Fair Infant, which is set as the second of the original poems in that volume,—a proof that the poet aimed at somewhat of chronologic arrangement in his compositions. The heading of it is “At a Vacation Exercise in the College, part Latin, part English. The Latin speeches ended, the English thus began.” Among our poet’s Pro-lusions is one which was pronounced “In Feris aestivis Collegii, sed concurrente, ut solet, tota fere Academæ juventute,” the subject of which is “Exercitationes non-nunquam ludicas Philosophiae Studiis non obesse,” and this is probably the Latin speech to which he alludes; for he was very careful in preserving all his compositions. Whatever the speech was, it is evident from v. 12 of the poem, that he rated it below the English compositions which followed it.

He commences with an address to his “Native Language,” in which he manages to bring in some of the most attractive subjects of ancient poetry; and then he introduces the Ens, with his two sons the Predicaments, “whereof the eldest stood for Substance with his canons.” Ens addresses his son Substance in a speech in the commencement highly poetic, and then really humorous. “The next, Quantity and Quality spake in prose; then Relation was called by his name.” This is followed by an address, in verse, to the principal rivers of England, of which we freely confess, with Warton, that we cannot see the relevance or the connection with the subject. “The rest was prose.”

The verses are all heroic couplets, such as he had already employed in his translation of the 114th Psalm.

EPITAPH ON THE MARCHIONESS OF WINCHESTER.

The subject of this pleasing poem was Jane, first wife of John, Marquis of Winchester, a Catholic nobleman, afterwards so conspicuous for his fidelity to Charles I., and his gallant defence of his house at Basingstoke, in Hants, against the troops of the Parliament. She was daughter to Thomas Viscount Savage, of Rock-Savage, in Cheshire, by Elizabeth, daughter and coheiress of Thomas Darcy, Earl of Rivers.* She died in childbed of her second son, in her twenty-third year; the year of her death is uncertain, but, as it will appear, it could not have been later than 1628.

This lady appears to have been a highly accomplished person. Warton quotes a letter of Howell's to her, dated, he tells us, March 15, 1626, in which he says that he had assisted her in learning Spanish, and that Nature and the Graces had exhausted all their treasure and skill in "framing this exact model of female perfection." The death, then, of so eminent a person probably caused what is termed a sensation, and, in the manner usual at the time, it became the theme of poetry. Warton says he had heard, but doubted if it was the case, that there was a Cambridge collection of verses on her death. Todd however informs us that in a volume

* Collins' Peerage, ii. 379. Hence Milton says—

'A viscount's daughter, an earl's heir.'

While Beaumont speaks of her "father's earldom." The former therefore seems to confound her with her mother, and the latter to mistake her father for her grandfather.

of manuscript poems in the British Museum, this epitaph occurs, with the date 1631, and at the bottom, "Jo. Milton, of Chr. Coll., Cambr." Mr. Hunter also informs us that in a contemporary collection of Peers' Pedigrees, in his possession, the same year is the date of the Marchioness' death. We have here then a clear proof of how little such documents are to be relied on, for this date is indubitably erroneous, as in the poems of Sir John Beaumont, published posthumously in 1629, there is one to the memory of this lady, so that, as we have said, she must have died in 1628, at latest. We regard however the fact of there having been a Cambridge collection as certain ; and those who set the matter on foot, whether the University authorities or not, probably sought the aid of Milton, who, although he had as yet written hardly anything in English, had in the close of 1626 distinguished himself by his Latin poems on the death of eminent personages. It is not at all likely that he would of his own accord have made the theme of his verse a lady of whom he could have known nothing but what common fame told. Warton however gives on this occasion a curious specimen of his sycophancy to the Egerton family. "It is natural to suppose," says he, "that her family was well acquainted with the family of Lord Bridgewater, belonging to the same county, for whom Milton wrote the Mask of Comus. It is therefore not improbable that Milton wrote this elegy, another poetical favour, in consequence of his acquaintance with the Egerton family." He actually would thus seem to make it posterior in order of composition to Comus ! But 'mark now how a plain tale shall put him down.' Milton's acquaintance with the Egerton family, if any, which we doubt, is allowed to have originated in his

father's acquisition of the house at Horton, on the estate of Lord Bridgewater; but this poem, as we have seen, could not have been written later than 1628, when Milton was in his twentieth year, and there seems to be no reason for supposing that his father had as yet gone to live at Horton.

Critics in general are agreed in acknowledging this to be a most pleasing poem. Hallam indeed qualifies his praise by saying that "the first lines are bad, and the last much worse;" and Dunster wishes that the poem had ended at the sixty-eighth verse, as "what follows seems only to weaken it, and the last verse is an eminent instance of the *bathos*." With this criticism we cannot quite agree. The first lines are a simple exposition of the subject, telling who the person celebrated was; and as to the *bathos* of the last verse,

No Marchioness, but now a Queen,

Milton had probably in his mind those passages of Scripture in which the pious departed are spoken of as kings, and as reigning with Christ, and he therefore naturally, when the subject was a female, employed the term *queen* to express that degree of spiritual exaltation.

The verse is in four-foot measure. It is probably his first employment of this species of verse, which he afterwards used with so much success in *L'Allegro*, *Il Penseroso*, and *Comus*.

Respecting this verse an error seems generally to prevail among critics. Observing that it consists of lines of seven as well as of eight syllables, *ex. gr.*—

This rich marble doth inter
The honoured wife of Winchester,

they call the former a trochaic, the latter an iambic

verse.* Such however is not the case. The trochaic line was at that time unknown to English poetry, and, if we mistake not, continued to be so till Percy used it in his translations of some Spanish *romances*; for though some preceding poems, such as Shenstone's Princess Elizabeth and Glover's Hosier's Ghost, appear to be trochaic, they are not such in reality,† but will, if accurately considered, be found to be iambics with the first foot monosyllabic, and the last hypermetric, as in

But hail, thou goddess sage and holy,
Hail, divinest Melancholy!

Trochaic verse was familiar to the Greeks and Romans, who seem to have transmitted it to the Provençals and Spaniards,‡ from whom it was borrowed by

* We will here observe, once for all, that we use these metric terms, as applied to modern verse, because the *ictus*, or metric accent, is the same as in the classic verses of these names. Modern verse does not attend much to quantity.

† In these poems the lines will generally be found to commence with monosyllables, while trochaic verse usually is fond of dissyllables. The movement of genuine trochaic verse is also different from that of these poems,—more light and tripping. It is not easy, in fact, to compose genuine trochaic verse in English.

‡ The popular verse of the Romans ran thus:—

Eē'ce Cæ'sar nūne triūmphat,
Quí subégit Gálliás.—*Suet. Jul.* 49 ;
Disce míles mílitáre,
Gálba est nón Gaetúlicús.—*Id. Galba*, 6 :

which is just the measure of the Spanish romances:—

Núnea fuéra cáballéro
De dámás tán bién servido
Cómo fuéra Lánzaróte
Cuándo dó Bretáña víno.

The Spanish verse, as we may see in the second line, admits the iamb in the first two feet.

Conde however (see Ticknor, *Hist. of Span. Lit.* i. 100) says, “In the versification of our Castilian ballads (*romances*) and *seguidillas*, we have received from the Arabs an exact type of their verses.” We doubt the fact.

the early poets of Germany, while the poetry of Italy rejected it almost totally, till about the time when, as we have stated, it was introduced into English poetry.*

The early English poetry was regulated by *ictus*, or beats, not by the number of syllables; it therefore should be measured by feet, and each foot may contain either two, or three syllables, or even only one at the beginning or after the *cæsura*. Thus even in our own days, in Byron's line,

Know ye the land where the cypress and myrtle,
the first foot is monosyllabic, and yet it is to be counted as an anapaest. Numerous instances of the same kind will be found in Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar. In Sir Walter Scott's

March, march, Ettrick and Tevidale,

the two first monosyllables are to be counted as dactyls, for the other lines are completely dactylic. So in Milton's Hymn on the Nativity, the two first lines of each stanza are of three feet, or, as is the usual expression, of six syllables:—

It was the winter wild,
While the heaven-born child.†

Yet we afterwards meet—

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet.

* Dante's contemporary, Barberini, had used trochaic in his Motetti, and a poet named Serafino Aquilano, who flourished in the fifteenth century, wrote trochaic verses in imitation of the Spanish Coplas (Lope de Vega, Prologo al Isido).

† It will be observed that in this line *born* is to be pronounced as a dissyllable; for Milton would never have placed the *ictus* on such a word as *the*. So in the third line of the present poem—

“A viscount's daughter, an earl's heir,”

for the same reason *earl* is dissyllabic, as also is *barn* in L'Allegro,

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is.

Nor all the gods beside
Longer dare abide.

It is then consonant to reason and logic to affirm that these supposed trochaics, even though whole poems have been composed exclusively in them, are in reality iambic verses of four feet, the first foot being monosyllabic. There are, as we have observed, even instances of the third foot also being such, *ex. gr.*

Over hill, over dale,
Thorough bush, thorough brier,
Over park, over pale,
Thorough flood, thorough fire.

Mids. Night's Dream, ii. 1.

Follow me, as I sing
And touch the warbled string.

Arcades, 86.

Sometimes swift, sometimes slow.—*Dyer, Grongar Hill*.

Some might choose to call these Cretics, but that is a foot unknown to English poetry.

ON THE MORNING OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY.

This admirable ode, which, as Hallam justly observes, is “perhaps the most beautiful in the English language,” was composed in the winter of 1629, just as the poet had completed his twenty-first year. Italy and Spain were

v. 51. This was a common practice with our old poets. *Fire* and *hour* frequently form two syllables.

Fit mother for that *pearl*, and before.—*Fairfax, Godf. of Buil.* i. 59.

In *four* troops, and each his several guide.—*Id. ib.* xvii. 14.

My *oars* broken and my tackling lost.—*Marlow, Dido*, iii. 1.

Be rushed upon ; thy *trice* noble cousin.—*Rich. II.* iii. 3.

And is not like the *sire* : honours thrive.—*All's Well, etc.*, ii. 3.

Crying, that's good that's gone. Our rash faults—*Ib.* v. 3.

already in possession of splendid lyric poetry, but England had as yet, unless we except Spenser's Hymns to Love and Beauty, and his nuptial verses, nothing of the kind to produce beyond short songs, and this remained the solitary specimen of the higher lyric poetry till Dryden arose. We offer no particular criticism on it, for it is, in effect, nearly all beauty. As such we regard even the introduction of the Heathen deities; for they add much to the picturesqueness of the imagery; and we are to recollect that in the opinion of the Rabbin and of many of the Fathers, they were real beings, namely, evil spirits which had been cast out of heaven. Johnson did not condescend even to notice this exquisite production, and Warton, having termed the nineteenth and twenty-sixth stanzas “the best part of the ode,” adds, “The rest chiefly consists of a string of affected conceits, which his early youth and the fashion of the times can only excuse.” Becoming language indeed for the Oxford Professor of Poetry! He is however willing to allow that “there is a dignity and simplicity in the fourth stanza of the hynn, worthy the maturest years and the best times. Nor is the poetry of the stanza immediately following, an expression or two excepted, unworthy of Milton.”

In the Introduction, Milton employs the stanza he had used in his verses on A Fair Infant. For the Hymn, he uses a stanza of eight lines, also devised by himself, consisting of two lines of three feet, followed by one of five; the same repeated; and then one of four, and a final line of six feet.

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION.

This short ode, consisting of two stanzas of fourteen lines each,—which we have been the first, we believe, to

divide,—was probably written immediately after that on the Nativity. Its brevity is, of course, owing to the nature of the subject, which did not offer much or agreeable matter for poetry. In it we meet with the Augustinian notions of satisfaction, which Milton, spite of his freedom of thought, seems to have held to the end of his life.

This stanza also is Milton's own. It consists chiefly of lines of five feet, with two of three feet after the seventh verse, and ending with three lines of three, two, and three feet respectively.

THE PASSION.

This ode was probably undertaken about the Easter after the one on the Nativity. If, as Warton conjectures, this last was a college exercise, the authorities, who saw how he had succeeded in that task, imposed the present on him also. But we doubt the correctness of this theory. Christmas is in the middle of a vacation, when the students are mostly with their families; and the Latin Elegy to Diodati, in which he tells him that he was at work on this ode, was evidently written toward Christmas, and from London. The circumstance of the ode on the Passion not having been completed also militates against the probability of its having been an imposed task. The poet modestly tells us that "This subject the author finding to be above the years he had when he wrote it, and nothing satisfied with what was begun, left it unfinished." It must be confessed, that though the opening stanzas are very fine, and the sixth remarkably so, yet it does not seem at all likely that it could ever have vied with that on the Nativity. It also contains *conceitti*, worthy of the Italian school of Marini, or of

Donne and Cowley, and probably these are the parts with which the poet was “nothing satisfied;” his natural taste revolting against that of the age, with which he was forcing himself to comply. The stanza is the same as that employed in the introduction to the *Nativity*, and possibly it had been his intention to add a hymn in a different measure.

EPITAPH ON SHAKESPEARE.

These lines first appeared among the commendatory verses prefixed to the second folio edition, in 1632, of Shakespeare’s Plays. It might therefore seem most probable that they were written in that year; but Milton himself, when printing them in the first edition of his poems, gives them the date of 1630. His memory might however have played him false on this as on some other occasions,—a matter here certainly of very little importance. The verses are valuable, as showing the high estimation in which Milton, who always expressed his real thoughts, held the immortal dramatist. Hurd objected to the thought expressed in the concluding lines, as being more in the manner of Waller than of Milton. This criticism is perhaps well founded, but the idea seems to have pleased the imagination of Pope, who adopted it in his Epitaph on Gay.

ON THE UNIVERSITY CARRIER.

These two sportive effusions were written on the occasion of the death of Hobson, a celebrated carrier, who plied between Cambridge and London, and from whom is derived the proverbial expression of “Hobson’s choice,” explained in the *Spectator* (No. 509). Hurd wonders that Milton should have inserted them in his edition of

1645 ; but Milton, as we have already observed, deemed nothing that he wrote to be worthless, and he presumed that the reader would take them for what they were meant to be—mere plays of fancy. The first is certainly light and amusing ; in the second the humour is more elaborate, the allusions more far-fetched, and the meaning not always easily to be ascertained. As Hobson died, it appears, January the 1st, 1630-31, while the plague was in London, these verses, it is probable, were written sometime in that month.

In the latter of these two poems, there is a passage of which we confess ourselves almost unable to make any sense :—

His leisure told him that his time was come,
And lack of load made his life burdensome,
That even to his last breath—there be that say it—
As he were prest to death he cried, More weight!

The only conjectures which we can make are, that it may be an allusion—and a very remote one—to the punishment of the *peine forte et dure*, in which the sufferer might call for more weight to be laid on him by way of a *coup de grâce*,—(we may observe, that “lack of load made his life *so* burdensome, that,”* etc. ;) or, as at the time, *were* was sometimes used for *was* after conjunctions,† the meaning might be, as (*i. e.* while) he was pressed to death with the weight or stupor of his disease.

* Our friend Mr. Singer, to whom we communicated this conjecture, informed us that a friend of his had given the very same explanation of the passage.

† “Like one that strove to shew his merry mood
When he *were* ill-disposed.”

Beaumont and Fletcher, Maid's Tragedy, iii. 2.

AT A SOLEMN MUSIC.

We have no means of ascertaining the date of this poem; but from the turn of the thoughts, similar to those in his odes on the events of our Lord's life, we feel inclined to ascribe it to one of the latter years of Milton's residence at the University. His mind was probably occupied at that time with serious ideas, as he seems to have been meditating on the subject of theology, with a view to adopting the Church as a profession.

It consists of only twenty-eight lines; the measure is five-foot, in general with one couplet of four-foot, and one single verse of the three-foot measure.

ON TIME. TO BE SET ON A CLOCK-CASE.

Here, too, we have no means of fixing the date. The high and solemn tone however, so nearly akin to that of the poem just noticed, would lead us to suppose that it might have been written about the same time. We therefore place it among those composed before he quitted the University.

The measure is of the same character as that of the preceding poem; verses of five feet, with some of four and three feet interspersed.

SONNET I. [VII.]*

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED AT THE AGE OF TWENTY-THREE.

Of this sonnet, Warton states as follows:—"Written at Cambridge, in 1631 [in November], and sent in a

* The numbers within brackets are those of the Sonnets in Todd's edition.

letter to a friend, who had importuned our author to take orders. Of this letter there are two drafts in the Trinity manuscript.* He there says, You object ‘that I have given myself up to dream away my years in the arms of studious retirement, like Endymion with the moon on Latmus hill.’ He calls this sonnet, ‘my *nighthward* thoughts sometime since made up in a Petrarchian stanza.’”

This was Milton’s first attempt in this species of composition, and though it is by no means devoid of merit, and is dignified and solemn in its tone, like all his poetry of that period, we must regard it as inferior to many of his other compositions of this kind. We learn from it that he was at that time familiar with the Italian poets; for he would never have alluded to Petrarcha as he does, if he knew him only at second-hand. Besides, as it is the earliest English specimen of a sonnet formed on the Italian model, he must have derived his knowledge of this form from Italian poetry.

The sonnet is the invention of the Italians, for there is no trace of it in the Provençal poetry. The earliest specimen is that of Lodovico Vernaccia, to which the date

* Of this celebrated MS. a full account will be found in the second edition of Warton’s edition of Milton’s poems. The pieces forming it were, it seems, found by Dr. Mason, in the eighteenth century, among the MSS. bequeathed in the preceding century to Trinity College, Cambridge, by Sir Henry Newton Puckering, and they were handsomely bound up in 1736, at the charge of Thomas Clarke, afterwards Master of the Rolls. It contains Arcades, Comus, Lycidas, Ode on Circumcision, At a Solemn Music, On Time, Sonnets IX., X., XI., XII., XIII., XVI., XVIII. (according to our arrangement), in Milton’s own hand, and Sonnets VIII., XV., XIX., XX., XXIII., XXIV., in different female hands. It also contains a copious list of subjects for the drama, and two copies of the letter quoted in the text, in the poet’s own handwriting.

of A.D. 1200 is given;* the next is, by Piero delle Vigne, the Chancellor of Frederick II., who flourished in the early part of the thirteenth century. It does not however follow that Vernaccia was the inventor of the sonnet, for he may have followed a model now lost. It soon became a favourite form with the Italian Cantori d'Amore, and has remained such till the present day. The celebrated sonnets of Petrarcha are numerous, but they are far exceeded in quantity by those of Torquato Tasso, the most prolific writer in this department of literature that ever existed, for his published sonnets are at least one thousand in number. In the beginning of the sixteenth century, the sonnet was adopted, along with the other Italian forms, by the poets of the Iberian peninsula; the most celebrated sonnets are, we believe, those of the unfortunate Luis de Camões. Not being well suited to the genius of the poetry of France, the sonnet does not appear ever to have found much favour in that country. It was used by some of the poets of Holland in the seventeenth century, but we are not aware of its adoption by the contemporary poets of Germany. It had more success in England, where it was introduced by Surrey and Wyatt in the reign of Henry VIII.; and we have numerous sonnets by Sydney, Spenser, Shakespeare, Daniell, Drayton, Drummond, and others. We do not meet with sonnets after the time of Milton, for nearly a century, when Edwards, the author of Canons of Criticism, wrote some, and Gray, and one or two others, single sonnets, in the Italian form, which also was used by T. Warton, in the latter part of the century, while Bowles and Charlotte Smith and Helen Maria Williams reverted to the

* See *Poeti del primo Secolo della Lingua Italiana*, vol. i. page 18. It is the third poem in that collection.

easy form of the old English sonnets. The poet of the present century most distinguished as a writer of sonnets is Wordsworth, who made Milton his model.*

The reader hardly requires to be told that the Italian sonnet is a poem consisting of fourteen five-foot lines, divided into two quatrains (*quaternari*) and two tercets (*terzine*). In the former there are only two rimes, and the most usual form is when the first, fourth, fifth, and eighth lines have the one, and the remaining four lines the other rime; but sometimes in Petrarcha, and the older poets, the rhimes are alternate. In the tercets much greater liberty is allowed; the rimes are sometimes two, but more generally three, and arranged at the will of the poet, but never in couplets.

The English poets totally altered the form of the sonnet. In their hands it became a poem of fourteen lines, consisting of three quatrains and a final couplet. Each quatrain had in general its own two independent rimes, but sometimes the same rimes were carried through two or even all the quatrains. The present sonnet of Milton's appears to have been the first return to the genuine Italian form made in the English language. He does not however always strictly adhere to it; for in his sonnet to Cromwell there are three quatrains terminated by a couplet, the two first however having, in the Italian manner, only two rimes. Three out of his five Italian sonnets also end in couplets, in which he may have fancied he had the authority of Dante and Petrarcha; but in these poets they are triplets, the tercets having only two rimes.

* Among Milton's sonnets, Wordsworth is said (Life, i. 289) to have given the preference to VIII., XVIII., XIX., XXI., XXII., XXIV., in our arrangement.

The preceding poems,—whether tasks imposed on his genius, or its voluntary effusions, written toward the close of Milton's academic career, and when his thoughts were very much directed toward theology,—have a solemn, serious, religious cast, suitable to the frame of mind in which we may suppose him to have been at that period. But when he had abandoned all thoughts of adopting the Church as a profession, and had retired to the rural seclusion of Horton, his mind took a different turn, and his poetry in consequence assumed a gayer attire; and it is perhaps no unsafe mode of procedure to assign to Horton all his poetry of a brighter hue, and in which we meet with rural imagery.

SONG ON MAY MORNING.

No date is assigned to this charming song, but we think there can hardly be a doubt of its having been written at Horton, on some lovely morning in the month of May.

The commencement and conclusion are in five-foot, the song in four-foot measure.

SONNET II. [I.] TO THE NIGHTINGALE.

We would also assign these beautiful lines to Horton, and to the month of May, for the reasons given above. In *our* eyes this sonnet is absolute perfection, and most certainly equal to anything of the kind in the Italian or any other language. Yet Johnson, it seems, could discern no merit in it; and even Wordsworth, as we have seen, did not rank it among those to which he gave the preference.

The concluding lines of this sonnet should serve as a warning to critics and biographers not to be too ready to

find traits of personal history in the productions of poets. We might, for instance, be induced to infer from it, that Milton was the victim of a hopeless attachment, and a very pretty theory might be formed from it, taken in conjunction with the first of his Latin elegies. We have indeed quoted above a little romance, to which it may have given occasion. But we know very well that such was not the case. The poet, in fact, as any one who has written verses must be well aware, is like the painter; a subject presents itself to the mind of the one and he paints it, of the other and he puts it into a poetic form, assuming the character of the lover, the hero, or whatever it may be, for the occasion, and then returning to his ordinary frame of mind. A recollection of this truth would dispel more than one ingenious theory.

L'ALLEGRO AND IL PENSERO.

During the happy period of Milton's life spent at Horton, though his mind was occupied by pursuits of the highest intellectual nature, yet poetry undoubtedly was not discarded from his thoughts; and he probably had always steadily in view his design of producing one day a poem which "the world would not willingly let die." Meanwhile, as if by way of prelude, his mind occasionally relaxed itself in poetic composition to oblige his friends, or to give expression to some idea which had presented itself in an attractive form. Such were the subjects of the two beautiful poems now under consideration, which, though the exact date cannot be ascertained, were beyond question written at Horton.

It may possibly be—as Warton, always anxious to derogate from the fame of Milton, maintains—that the idea was suggested by the verses prefixed to Burton's

Anatomy of Melancholy, or by a song in Beaumont and Fletcher's Nice Valour; but we rather think that it rose spontaneously in the poet's own mind. At all events, Milton seems to have conceived the idea of enumerating and representing the objects more likely to attract the attention of a man of a lively, cheerful temperament, and of another whose disposition was thoughtful and serious. They form a pair of poetic pendants, as we often see pictures in a gallery, and he gave them the respective Italian titles of L'Allegro, or the Cheerful Man, and Il Penseroso, or the Thoughtful Man. The measure which he selected for these poems was the four-foot iambic, then so much in use, and equally adapted for light or serious subjects. On the true nature of this measure we have already offered some observations.

Even Johnson is obliged to allow that of these poems “opinion is uniform; every man that reads them, reads them with pleasure;” and he terms them “two noble efforts of imagination.” Warton, with all his prejudices, also had too much poetic feeling not to be charmed with them. From Hallam they receive unlimited praise. In fact, it is utterly impossible that any one with even a particle of poetic feeling could read them with any sentiments but those of delight and admiration. The only objection which Johnson makes seems to be founded on his ignorance of the exact meaning of the Italian terms employed by Milton. “I know not,” says he, “whether the characters are kept sufficiently apart. No mirth can indeed be found in his melancholy, but I am afraid that I always meet some melancholy in his mirth.” But if he had adhered to his own translation of Allegro, *cheerful*, he might have seen that mirth in its usual sense was not included in its meaning, but merely tranquil, quiet pleasure, that,

in fact, of a philosophic mind ; and if he had understood the exact meaning of Pensero, which he most incorrectly renders by *Pensive*,* he would have seen that though Melancholy (*la douce Mélancolie*)† is invoked, Il Pensero is not by any means what we term a pensive or melancholy man.

Warton, too, commits an error, when he says that “ No man was ever so disqualified to turn Puritan as Milton. In both these poems he professes himself to be highly pleased with the choral church-music, with Gothic cloisters, the painted windows and vaulted aisles of a venerable cathedral, with tilts and tournaments, and with masks and pageantries.” Whatever Milton’s real feelings may have been respecting these objects—and he surely was not insensible to the charms of cathedral music or Gothic architecture—we are not justified in deducing any such inferences from the poems. There is, as we have just observed, no greater, though no more common, error, than that of finding the real sentiments and feelings of a poet in his verses. Every good poet is more or less of a dramatist ; he assumes a particular character, or places himself in a peculiar situation, and then thinks and expresses himself as he supposes he should if he were such a person, or so situated. So Milton, conceiving himself to be a man of a cheerful or of a serious mood, looks round him and selects the objects most likely to interest such a person.

Though loath to venture to find a fault in such perfect

* The Italian word is *pensieroso*, not *penseroso*, from *pensiero*, and its proper sense is *thoughtful*, never *pensive*, which is *pensoso*.

† “There is a joy in grief when peace dwells in the bosom of the sad,” is the beautiful Ossianic expression. Another, equally beautiful, is, “Like the memory of joys that are past, pleasant and mournful to the soul.”

works of so great a poet, we must say, that the origin assigned to Melancholy, however philosophically just it may be, has always grated on our feelings. The species of incest there described is such as no ideas of a Golden Age, or any particular state of society, can make accord with our moral instincts, and we must confess that we wish the poet had assigned her different parents. Possibly Milton's mind was influenced by the chorus respecting the Golden Age in Tasso's *Aminta*, where the morality is certainly not of the finest.

The sequence of ideas in these, the first descriptive poems in our language, is as follows.

The Cheerful Man, after driving away Melancholy, whom he portrays in the darkest colours, invokes Euphrosyne or Mirth, one of the Graces whom Venus bore to Bacchus, or, as he rather chooses to believe, the offspring of Zephyrus and Flora. He invites her to come with all her train, and to "admit him of her crew," and then proceeds to enumerate the circumstances and objects which will yield him pleasure. He commences at day-break with the song of the lark, then he hears and sees the cock among his dames, and next listens to the hound and horn echoing from the hill-side and through the woods. He walks at this hour of prime over hillocks and among hedgerows toward the east, where the sun is now rising, amid the clouds of various hues. He hears the ploughman, the milkmaid, the mower, and the shepherd, at their various occupations. His eye surveys the landscape round, the lawns and fallows, mountains, meads, brooks and rivers. At a distance is a castellated edifice embosomed in trees, the abode, it may be, of some high-born beauty; at hand, rises from between two aged oaks, the smoke from the chimney of a cot-

tage, where a country lass has prepared the meal at which two peasants are seated, and she then goes out to help to bind the sheaves, or to make the hay. At other times he will repair to the hamlets, which lie on higher grounds, where he will listen to the merry peals of the church-bells, and the jocund sound of the rebeck, to which the village lads and lasses are dancing, while the old people and the children also are enjoying the holiday: When daylight fails, all retire to drink the spicy nut-brown ale, and, after telling stories of fairies and goblins, they go to rest.

Having thus gone through the pleasures of the country he repairs to the city. Here he witnesses tilts, weddings, masks and pageants, and then goes to the theatre to see the comedies of Ben Jonson or Shakespeare. Above all delights, he desires that arising from the union of vocal and instrumental music, and concludes by assuring Mirth that if she yields him these he will live with her for ever.

The Serious Man after having in a mild tone warned off "vain deluding joys," invokes the presence of the sage and holy goddess, divinest Melancholy, of whose appearance and dress he gives a most fascinating description. He prays her not to change her usual mien and gait, and enumerates the members of the train which was to attend her state. The only sound to be heard should be the song of the nightingale, and that "in her sweetest, saddest plight," while the moon would check her ear over an oak-tree to listen to the lay.

While, as we have seen, the Cheerful Man commences with the song of the lark and the rising of the sun, the Serious Man selects for the same purpose the song of the nightingale and the light of the moon. Should he miss

the former, he walks, *unseen* by the peasants, who were retired to rest, on the village-green, to observe the latter making her way in heaven through the clouds; or ascending some rising ground, he listens to the sound of the curfew-bell, as it comes mellowed over the waters of a lake. If the state of the weather were such that he could not have these out-of-door enjoyments, he would sit alone in a room with no light but that proceeding from the “glowing embers,” and hearing no sounds but the chirrup of the cricket on the hearth, or the voice of the bellman blessing the house from evil. Or he would sit at midnight by his lamp, in some “high lonely tower,” studying the works of Hermes Trismegistus, or Plato, to learn their ideas of the future abode of the soul, and of the various kinds of dæmons. At times, the subject of his studies would be the tragedies of ancient Greece, or those few (namely, Shakespeare’s) with which modern times had ennobled the “buskinéd stage.” Epic and romantic poetry would also form part of his studies; for he wishes that Melancholy had the power to awake Musæus and Orpheus, to sing their lost strains to him, or Chaucer to finish his Squire’s Tale; and he appears to intimate that Spenser, and other romantic poets, would engage his attention.*

Thus should morn oft find him, not however in his gay, brilliant garb, but wrapt in clouds, attended by piping winds, followed by a shower, whose drops would fall every minute from the eaves when the day began to clear. At noon, when the sun was high and strong, he would retire to the recesses of some dense wood, and there, lulled by the humming of the bees and the murmuring of the waters, he would fall asleep, and in his

* It is rather remarkable that the Scriptures do not form a part of the studies of the Serious Man.

sleep be visited by dreams of delicious mystery. But his favourite haunt would be the cathedral with its cloisters, its pillars, its painted windows, and its choral music, which would

Dissolve him into ecstasies,
And bring all heaven before his eyes.

He finally would seek out a hermitage for the abode of his latter days, and advance in wisdom as he advanced in years.

Exquisitely beautiful as these poems are, they still furnish a proof that Milton “read Nature through the spectacles of books,”* for we nowhere meet with that accurate description of natural objects, indicative of actual observation, which we find in Homer, Dante, and Thomson. Some too are inaccurate, as the sky-lark coming to his window, and the bee with *honeyed* thigh (*crura thymo plena*).

Mountains, on whose barren breast
The labouring clouds do often rest,

is a kind of guess at Nature; for we know not where he might have read of it, and are certain that he could not have seen it when he wrote these poems.†

ARCADES.

As we have stated in the Life of Milton‡, the Countess Dowager of Derby resided at Harefield, near Ux-

* See above, page 103, how his friend Diodati rallies him on this habit.

† “After a certain point of elevation, the effect of mountains depends much more upon their form, than upon their absolute height. This point is the one to which fleecy clouds (not thin watery vapours) are accustomed to descend.”—*Wordsworth, Life*, ii. 157.

‡ See above, p. 119.

bridge, some miles from Horton ; and the poet's musical friend, Henry Lawes, was in the service, as it was termed, of her and her family. On Shrove-Tuesday night, in 1633-34, the splendid mask of *Cœlum Britannicum*, the machinery by Inigo Jones, the poetry by Thomas Carew, and the music by Henry Lawes, was presented in the Banqueting-House, at Whitehall, the King himself being one of the maskers. Among the “young lords and noblemen's sons” attending on them, were Lord Brackley and Mr. Thomas Egerton, the grandsons of the Countess of Derby. These boys, and some of their relations, or more probably Lawes himself, may then have conceived the idea of giving an entertainment of a similar kind to the venerable Countess herself; and for the requisite dramatic narrative and lyric poetry, Lawes had recourse to his gifted friend at Horton.* We have already shown the utter absurdity of the supposition of Milton's being a visitor at Harefield.

The poetry is splendid, perhaps too good for the occasion, and probably there were few present who fully comprehended the poet's sublime language respecting the music of the spheres ; but as Lawes probably recited with taste and expression, the effect must have been highly agreeable. We do not see the necessity of assuming, with Warton, that “unquestionably this Mask was a much longer performance,” or that, as he says,

* That *Arcades* and *Comus* were written for Lawes, and not for the Countess of Derby or the Egertons, appears from Lawes' Dedication of *Comus*, in which he says, “the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my several friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the public view,” etc. He surely would not express himself in such terms if he did not regard it as his property. Professor E. Taylor, in an Essay presently to be quoted, expresses the very same opinion as that which we have given.

there was also prose and machinery. As the entertainment was given to the Countess at her own house, the machinery would have most probably been at her own expense, while the terms “presented . . . by some noble persons of her family,” would lead us to suppose that it was entirely gratuitous. The whole seems complete as it is. . The maskers enter singing, the Genius of the Wood appears and addresses them; he then, with a song, leads them up to where the Countess was sitting ; they dance before her, and the Genius then perhaps concludes with the other song. It appears to us that the entertainment, like Ben Jonson’s *Satyr*, was presented in the open air, in Harefield Park, and that therefore it took place in the summer-time. The place where the Countess was stationed was probably hung round with lamps, which will explain the various allusions made in the songs to the radiance with which she was invested.

COMUS.

The success of the Arcades probably inspired Lawes and the Egerton family with ideas of a bolder cast. The Earl of Bridgewater, head of that family, and son-in-law of the Countess of Derby, had been appointed, in 1631, Lord President of Wales and the Marches; but, from some cause or other he did not take up his official residence at Ludlow castle, in Salop, till the autumn of 1634,—the year, as we have seen, in which the Arcades was presented. Warton tells us (from a MS., he says, of Oldys’), that “on this occasion he was attended by a large concourse of the neighbouring nobility and gentry. Among the rest came his children, in particular, Lord Brackley, Mr. Thomas Egerton, and Lady Alice. They had been on a visit at a house of their relations, the

Egerton family, in Herefordshire ; and in passing through Haywood forest were benighted, and the Lady Alice was even lost for a short time. This accident, which in the end was attended with no bad consequences, furnished the subject of a Mask for a Michaelmas festivity, and produced Comus. Lord Bridgewater was appointed Lord President, May 12, 1633. When the perilous adventure in Haywood forest happened, if true, cannot now be told ; it must have been soon after. The Mask was acted at Michaelmas, 1634." We must confess, that we certainly feel inclined to regard this tale of the Children in the Wood, as somewhat apocryphal, and as being founded on Comus. At all events, it must have occurred, not in 1633, but a short time before the representation of the Mask, in the prologue to which it is said—

. . . His fair offspring, nursed in princely lore,
Are coming to attend their father's state
And new-entrusted sceptre.

This would seem to prove that it was their first visit to Ludlow, and it is most probable that the Mask had been prepared and learned by the young actors at Harefield, and was presented by them on their arrival at Ludlow castle.

The origin of Comus would appear to have been as follows :—There was a "pleasant concited comedy," by the unfortunate George Peele, named *The Old Wives Tale*, which Lawes probably had read ; and it may have struck him that some of the incidents in it might be employed in the construction of the Mask, to be written by Milton, at his request, and to be presented by himself and his young pupils at Ludlow. All perhaps that he proposed was, that, as the lady and her brothers were passing through a wood, on their way, she should be

lost, and fall into the power of an enchanter, from which she should be delivered by her brothers, and it may be by himself in the character of an attendant spirit. For all the rest, he trusted to the genius of his poetic friend, and well he might trust to it; for the noble poem that thence arose must have amazed himself and every one that heard or read it. As Hallam most justly observes, it "was sufficient to convince any one of taste and feeling, that a great poet had arisen in England, and one partly formed in a different school from his contemporaries."

If we allow ourselves to be guided by Warton and Todd, we shall detract considerably from Milton's powers of invention, for we shall find nearly all the incidents of Comus in the Old Wives Tale. But, on reading the Play itself, we shall be surprised to see how trifling and how unconnected these incidents are which he is accused of adopting. In fact, we almost doubt if Milton had read the Play at all, or knew any more of its contents than what Lawes told him, who may not even have mentioned it.

"This very scarce and curious piece," says Warton, "exhibits, among other parallel incidents, two Brothers wandering in quest of their Sister, whom an Enchanter had imprisoned. This magician had learned his art from his mother Meroc, as Comus had been instructed by his mother Circe. The Brothers call out on the lady's name, and Echo replies. The Enchanter had given her a potion, which suspends the powers of reason and superinduces oblivion of herself. The Brothers afterwards meet with an Old Man, who is also skilled in magic, and by listening to his soothsaying, they recover their lost Sister. But not till the Enchanter's wreath had been torn from his

head, his sword wrested from his hand, a glass broken, and a light extinguished.” Warton, in addition, notices that in the Old Wives Tale, three adventurers are lost in a wood, where they sing a song, hear a dog, and fancy themselves to be near some village. They meet a peasant with a lantern, who invites them to his cottage. His old wife then tells a tale, to pass the time. The personages of the tale appear, of whom the first are two brothers, who are just landed in Albion in search of the Princess their sister, whom an Enchanter in the shape of a dragon had stolen away. A soothsayer enters, with whom they converse about her, and in their search Echo replies to their call. “They find, too late, that their Sister is under the captivity of a wicked magician, and that she has tasted his cup of oblivion. In the close, after the wreath is torn from the Magician’s head, and he is disarmed and killed by a Spirit, in the shape and character of a beautiful page of fifteen years old, she still remains subject to the Magician’s enchantment. But in a subsequent scene, the Spirit enters, and declares that the Sister cannot be delivered but by a lady, who is neither maid, wife, nor widow. The Spirit blows a magical horn, and the Lady appears; she dissolves the charm, by breaking a glass and extinguishing a light, as I have before recited. A curtain is withdrawn, and the Sister is seen seated and asleep. She is disenchanted, and restored to her senses, having been spoken to *thrice*. She then rejoins her two Brothers, with whom she returns home; and the Boy-spirit vanishes under the earth. The magician is here called, ‘enchanter vile,’ as in Comus, v. 907.” These resemblances, when thus stated, appear no doubt very close, but still we say, Read the Old Wives Tale, and you will see how really faint they

are. As to that Play having been “the favourite of Milton’s early youth,” as Warton hints, we utterly repudiate the supposition.

We are willing to concede to Todd, and the critics whom he quotes, that Milton may have been in some slight degree indebted to the *Comus* of Erycius Puteanus, which was first published at Louvain in 1608, and was reprinted at Oxford in 1634, the very year in which the Mask was written. He would seem to have derived from it the name and character of Comus, the mode of his first appearance, and some of the ideas and sentiments ascribed to him. We certainly think it extremely likely that Milton had purchased and read a book which had been thought deserving of being issued from the press in Oxford at that very time.

It is also said that Milton was under obligation to the *Faithful Shepherdess* of Fletcher for some of the sentiments and imagery of *Comus*. No doubt he had read that beautiful drama, and Warton has pointed out some places in it which very much resemble some of those toward the end of Milton’s Mask, of which they were probably the original. We may also see, in various other passages, that that drama was in the mind of the poet. There had been three editions of it anterior to the composition of *Comus*, and it had been acted at Court on Twelfth Night, 1633–34, and several times afterwards in that year at one of the theatres.

That *Comus* is an exquisitely beautiful poem, is what no one ever has had the hardihood to deny. Even Johnson confesses that “a work more truly poetical is rarely found;” yet he cannot avoid finding, or rather fancying, blemishes. He says it is deficient as a drama, and the action is not probable; the simple answer to which is,

that it is a mask, and not a drama ; that the conduct of the brothers in leaving their sister is not reasonable; but surely the poet gives a very simple reason for it : that the prologue spoken in the wild woods is addressed to the audience ; and to whom are the prologues in Euripides addressed, no matter where the scene may be ? He says both it and all the speeches are too long ; but they are not more so than those in the Grecian drama and the Italian pastorals. He allows that the song of Comus is good, but the following soliloquy is tedious, though elegant. The song of the lady, he says, “ must owe much to the voice if ever it can delight ! ” and all that follows is tedious and unentertaining. To this we can only reply, that tastes *do* differ wonderfully. The dispute between Comus and the lady, he thinks the best part of the piece, but the dialogue is not quick enough. “ The songs are vigorous and full of imagery, but they are harsh in their diction, and not very musical in their numbers.” This surely is the blind man judging of colours. He concludes by saying, “ Throughout the whole the figures are too bold, and the language too luxuriant for dialogue. It is a drama in the epic style, inelegantly splendid and tediously instructive.” Again we reply, it is a mask, not a drama.

We may finally observe, that were Comus to be represented at the present day in the same manner as it was at Ludlow Castle, we should probably observe a want of harmony between the actors and the language which was not noticed at that time. Lady Alice was not more than thirteen years of age, and Lord Brackley only twelve, and their brother of course still younger ; and it seems difficult to conceive how children like these could fully comprehend the lofty language which they

had to deliver. Besides, the appearance of the two boys with Lawes, a full-grown man, must have been somewhat incongruous. We are not told who presented Comus, but he also was of course a man. We are, however, to recollect that various plays, among the rest the learned serious dramas of Ben Jonson, were represented by the children (*i. e.* choir boys) of St. Paul's, the Chapel Royal, and other places.

There is a difficulty, unnoticed by critics, in the following place of this poem :—

The leaf was darkish and had prickles on it,
But in another country, as he said,
Bore a bright golden flower, but not in this soil ;
Unknown and like esteemed, and the dull swain
Treads on it daily with his clouted shoon.—*v. 631.**

It would seem from this that it was the leaf, not the plant, that bore the flower, which could hardly have been the poet's meaning. *But*, then, should have been *and*, and *bore*, *it bore*. In like manner *unknown* is rather unconnected and obscure ; the probable meaning is, unknown as to its virtues, and therefore treated as a mere weed. This is one of the most negligently constructed passages in the whole of Milton's poetry; but as we shall show, he was at this period not over-studious of grammatical accuracy.

* The notes of the critics on this passage are worth reading, as specimens of learned trifling and ignorance of the principles of English verse. They actually scan *v. 633*,

Bóre a bright gólden flówer, but not in this soíl,
in order to avoid a hypereatalectic verse. Of course they also read,—

Think whát and bé advised ; you are bút young yét.—755.
When such was their mode of reading, no wonder that Warton should say, "Milton, notwithstanding his singular skill in music, appears to have had a very bad ear ; and it is hard to say on what principle he modulated his lines." He modulated them here at least on the very same principle as the dramatists, in whom such lines as the above are numerous.

I shall appear some harmless villager,
 Whom thrift keeps up about his country gear.
 But here she comes, I fairly step aside
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.

MS., and ed. of 1637 & '45.

This is printed in the edition of 1673,—

I shall appear some harmless villager,
 And hearken, if I may, her business here.
 But here she comes, I fairly step aside

In the *errata* we are directed, apparently by the poet himself,* to “leave out the comma after *may*, and for *here* to read *hear*,” and this is certainly an improvement; for if we retain the other reading, we must suppose *hearken* to signify *hear*, a sense it never bears to our knowledge. In like manner in

That there eternal summer dwells (*v. 988, MS., ed. 1637, '45*), we are directed to omit *that*. The editors, following we know not what rule, adopt the latter and reject the former correction. We have adopted both.

The two following pieces were prefixed to Comus in the edition of 1645, but omitted in that of 1673, of course by directions from the poet himself.

To the Right Honorable John Lord Viscount Bracy, son and heir apparent to the Earl of Bridgewater, &c.†

MY LORD,

This poem, which received its first occasion of birth from your-

* He directs that the verses At a Solemn Music should come after the Elegie, as he terms the lines On the Death of a Fair Infant. As he took no notice of the omission of one line and the transposition of two others—an evident printer's blunder—in this place of Comus, it is plain that the corrections were made from memory only.

† The following motto was prefixed to the edition of 1637, whether by Milton himself or by Lawes is uncertain, but probably by the latter:—

“Eheu! quid volui misero mihi? floribus austrum
 Perditus.”

self and others of your noble family, and much honour from your own person in the performance, now returns again to make a small dedication of itself to you. Although not openly acknowledged by the author, yet it is a legitimate offspring, so lovely, and so much desired, that the often copying of it hath tired my pen to give my severall friends satisfaction, and brought me to a necessity of producing it to the publike view; and now to offer it up in all rightfull devotion to those fair hopes and rare endowments of your much promising youth, which give a full assurance, to all that know you, of a future excellency. Live, sweet Lord, to be the honour of your name, and receive this as your own, from the hands of him who hath by many favours been long obliged to your most honoured parents, and as in this representation your attendant Thyrsis, so now in all reall expression

Your faithfull and most humble servant,

H. LAWES.

*The Copy of a Letter written by Sir Henry Wooton to the Author,
upon the following Poem.*

From the Colledge, this 13th of April, 1638.

SIR,

It was a special favour when you lately bestowed upon me here the first taste of your acquaintance, though no longer then to make me know that I wanted more time to value it, and to enjoy it rightly; and in truth, if I could then have imagined your farther stay in these parts, which I understood afterwards by Mr. H.,* I would have been bold, in our vulgar phrase, to mend my draught (for you left me with an extreme thirst), and to have begged your conversation again, joyntly with your said learned friend, at a poor meal or two, that we might have banded together som good authors of the ancient time: among which, I observed you to have been familiar.

Since your going you have charged me with new obligations, both for a very kinde letter from you, dated the sixth of this month, and for a dainty peece of entertainment which came therewith. Wherein I should much commend the Tragical part, if the

* Probably John Hales of Eton.

Lyrical did not ravish me with a certain Dorique delicacy in your songs and odes; wherunto I must plainly confess to have seen nothing parallel in our language: *Ipsa mollities*. But I must not omit to tell you, that I now onely owe you thanks for intimating unto me (how modestly soever) the true artificer. For the work itself I had viewed som good while before with singular delight, having received it from our common friend Mr. R.* in the very close of the late R.'s poems, printed at Oxford, whereunto it is added (as I now suppose), that the accessory might help out the principal according to the art of stationers, and to leave the reader *con la bocca dolce*.

Now, Sir, concerning your travels, wherein I may chaleno a little more priviledge of discours with you; I suppose you will not blanch Paris in your way; therefore I have been bold to trouble you with a few lines to Mr. M. B.† whom you shall easily find attending the young Lord S.‡ as his governor; and you may surely receive from him good directions for the shaping of your further journey into Italy, where he did reside by my choice som time for the king, after my own recess from Venice.

I should think that your best line would be to thorow the whole length of France to Marseilles, and thence by sea to Genoa, whence the passage into Tuscany is as diurnal as a Gravesend barge: I hasten, as you do to Florence, or Siena, the rather to tell you a short story from the interest you have given me in your safety.

At Siena I was tabled in the house of one Alberto Scipioni, an old Roman courtier in dangerous times, having bin steward to the Duca di Paglano, who with all his family were strangled, save this onely man that escaped by foresight of the tempest: with him I had often much chat of those affairs; into which he took pleasure to look back from his native harbour; and at my departure toward Rome (which had been the center of his experience) I had wonn confidence enough to beg his advice, how I might carry myself securely there, without offence of others, or of mine own conscience. “Signor Arrigo mio,” sayes he, “i pensieri stretti,

* The first R. (Warton says) is probably Rouse, the Bodley librarian; the second, Thomas Randolph, author of *The Muses' Looking-glass, &c.*

† Probably, as Warton says, Michael Branthwaite, formerly agent at Venice.

‡ S. is Seudamore.

ed il viso sciolto," will go safely over the whole world ; of which Delphian oracle (for so I have found it) your judgement doth need no commentary; and therefore (Sir) I will commit you with it to the best of all securities, God's dear love, remaining

Your friend, as much at command

As any of longer date,

HENRY WOOTON.

(*Postscript.*)

SIR,

I have expressly sent this my footboy to prevent your departure without som acknowledgement from me of the receipt of your obliging Letter, having myself through som busines, I know not how, neglected the ordinary conveyance. In any part where I shall understand you fixed, I shall be glad, and diligent, to entertain you with home novelties; even for some fomentation of our friendship, too soon interrupted in the cradle.

LYCIDAS.

One of Milton's most intimate friends at Cambridge had been Mr. Edward King, son of Sir John King, Secretary for Ireland under the reign of three successive monarchs. They belonged to the same college, Christ-church, and appear to have been engaged at the same time in the study of divinity. In the beginning of August, 1637, King embarked at Chester, in a very crazy vessel, in order to pass over to Ireland to visit his family and friends ; but while the ship was still close to the English coast, it struck on a sunken rock, and all on board, it is said, perished. The fate of King, who was only twenty-five years old, excited great grief among his literary friends, which was exhibited in a manner usual at the time, by verses in his honour ; and in the following year there was published at Cambridge, a thin quarto volume, containing three Greek, nineteen Latin, and thirteen English poems, in honour of the deceased ; an ac-

count of his life, etc. was prefixed, probably from the pen of II. More, the Platonist, who wrote one of the Greek poems. Among the English poems is Milton's Lycidas. It stands last in the volume, for which ingenious reasons have been assigned, while it may be that, as it had to be transmitted from Horton, it did not arrive till after the other poems had been printed. According to the Trinity MS. it was written in November, 1637.

In his depreciation of this beautiful poem, Johnson actually runs riot ; he will not allow it merit of any kind. We will transcribe the whole *tirade*, as a proof of his want, either of true poetic feeling, or of critical justice and equity.

“The diction is harsh, the rimes uncertain, the numbers unpleasing. . . . It is not to be considered as the effusion of real passion, for passion runs not after remote allusions and obscure opinions. Passion plucks no berries from the myrtle and ivy, nor calls upon Arethusa and Mincius, nor tells of ‘rough satyrs,’ and ‘fawns with cloven heels.’ Where there is leisure for fiction, there is little grief. In this poem there is no nature, for there is no truth ; there is no art, for there is nothing new. Its form is that of a pastoral, easy, vulgar, and therefore disgusting ; whatever images it can supply are long ago exhausted, and its inherent improbability always forces dissatisfaction on the mind. When Cowley tells of Hervey, that they studied together, it is easy to suppose how much he must miss the companion of his labours and the partner of his discoveries ; but what image of tenderness can be excited by these lines—*We drove afield*, etc.? We know that they never drove afield, and that they had no flocks to batten ; and though it be allowed that the representation may be allegorical, the true meaning

is so uncertain and remote, that it is never sought, because it cannot be known when it is found. Among the flocks, and copses, and flowers, appear the heathen deities, Jove and Phœbus, Neptune and Æolus, with a long train of mythological imagery, such as a college easily supplies. Nothing can less display knowledge, or less exercise invention, than to tell how a shepherd has lost his companion, and must now feed his flocks alone, without a judge of his skill in piping, and how one god asks another god, What is become of Lycidas? and how neither god can tell. He who thus grieves will excite no sympathy; he who thus praises will confer no honour. The poem has yet a grosser fault; with these trifling fictions are mingled the most awful and sacred truths, such as ought never to be polluted with such irreverent combinations. The shepherd likewise is now a feeder of sheep, and afterwards an ecclesiastical pastor, a superintendent of a Christian flock. Such equivocations are always unskilful; but here they are indecent, and at least approach to impiety, of which however I believe the author to have been unconscious." He adds, "Surely no man could have fancied he read Lycidas with pleasure, had he not known the author."

We surely shall not be accused of presumption, if we say, that it would be a mere waste of time to enter into a formal refutation of such criticism as this. Johnson, it is evident, was determined to make, if he could not find, faults; and with such critics reasoning is useless. It is not however every class of mind that can appreciate or enjoy such highly imaginative poetry as that of Lycidas, and there are very many, in fact perhaps a large majority of readers, who will derive little pleasure from it, while they have a high relish for the poetry of Dryden

and Pope. *Lycidas* is, as it has been said, “a good test of a real feeling for what is peculiarly called poetry,” and we know that that feeling is not by any means common.

It was an early but erroneous opinion that the bucolic poetry of Virgil was allegoric;* that, for example, in the fifth eclogue, under the name of Daphnis, the Sicilian shepherd, was concealed the person of Caesar, the Dictator, whose praises and whose apotheosis were there sung. In the Middle Ages this opinion was universal, and under the pastoral form, Dante, Petrarcha and Boccaccio, shot their sharpest arrows against Guelfism and the Papacy. In like manner the Shepherd’s Calendar of Spenser is allegoric, and some of the *Aeglogues* are—of course to the horror of High-church bigots, like Johnson,—devoted to the exposure of ecclesiastic abuses. We find pastoral poetry employed in this allegoric manner, down to the eighteenth century, a proof perhaps that it was not repugnant to the general taste; and these, we must recollect, were times of far more poetic feeling than those of Johnson, or than the present utilitarian age. This species of allegory seems to have pleased the imagination of Milton, for he employed it again in his *Epitaphium Damonis*, in which he lamented the death of his friend Diodati. Both poems are addressed to the imagination, rather than to the feelings; for time sufficient had elapsed in both cases to let these subside; and it is not to be supposed that a spirit elevated and chastened by religion, such as Milton’s, would indulge in the expression of vulgar and earthly sorrow. With the eye of faith, he sees his friends removed to scenes of greater joy and

* On this subject we may venture, we think, to refer the reader for full information to our edition of the *Bucolics* and *Georgics* of Virgil.

bliss ; and, his mind therefore being at peace, the only faculty he could employ was the imagination. We may ask any reader of true taste and poetic feeling, if he thinks it likely that he should receive as much pleasure as he does at present from Lycidas, if the poet had divested it of pastoral ideas, banished all allegoric forms, abstained with religious awe from introducing the “Pilot of the Galilean lake,” and written it after such a manner as would have obtained the approbation of Johnson. We trow not.

As to the versification of Lycidas, it was of course disagreeable to the ear of Johnson, which could relish nothing but tame regularity, ‘the right butter-woman’s rank to market,’ as Touchstone terms it. The verse is of Milton’s own formation, in this, as in most of his other poems. From Tasso and Guarini he adopted the practice of mingling three-foot lines with the regular verses of five feet, and of adding occasionally the ornament of rime. In this he did not follow any rule but that of his own ear, and they therefore can only be perfectly enjoyed by those few whose ear, like his own, is fully attuned to the variety of poetic melody. It has not, we believe, been observed by any critic,* that the last eight lines of Lycidas form a perfect stanza in *ottava rima*. As they stand detached, such was probably the poet’s design ; but we meet with eight other lines (124–131), which, though they terminate a paragraph, are united with what precedes more closely than is ever the case in the Italian poets. Whether this was accidental or not, we are unable to determine. He had, it is true, the authority of Fairfax † for such a structure ; but we incline to think

* Mason however was aware of it, as he imitated it in his *Musæus*.

† See Godfrey of Bullogne, xix. 3, 4.

it casual, as in another place (*vv. 165–172*), by merely transposing two lines we should have a perfect stanza, and in a third (*vv. 111–118*), by altering a single rime.

The following passage in this poem long perplexed the critics:—

Or whether thou, to our moist vows denied,
Sleepest by the fable of Bellerus old,
Where the great Vision of the guarded Mount
Looks toward Namancos and Bayona's hold.

At length Warton threw light on this, as on many other obscure places. He showed that the place called by the poet “the fable of Bellerus old” was St. Michael’s Mount, at the Land’s-end, in Cornwall, anciently named Bellerium, from which the poet formed the name Bellerus, as that of one of the fabulous old giants who, according to Geoffrey of Monmouth, possessed Britain in times of old. He further adds, that, beside his celebrated apparition on Mount Gargano, in Italy, the archangel Michael had appeared on various other eminences, among others on this in Cornwall, thence named from him. Warton describes St. Michael’s Mount as a steep rock in Mount’s Bay, accessible from the land at low-water. On its summit stood a monastery, founded before the time of Edward the Confessor, with which was connected a fortress. A stone lantern in one of the angles of the tower of the church is called St. Michael’s chair; but this is not the original chair of which Carew, in his Survey of Cornwall, says, “a little without the castle there is a bad seat in a craggy place, called St. Michael’s chair.” Warton further quotes William of Worcester (A.D. 1490), who, in speaking of this place, says there was an “apparitio Sancti Michaelis in Monte Tumba antea vocato Le Hore

Rock in the Wode ;”* which Hoar Rock, he says, is the Mount, which, according to Drayton and Carew, was anciently covered with thick wood. There is still, he adds, a tradition that a vision of St. Michael, seated on this crag, appeared to some hermits, which gave occasion to the building of the monastery. The “great vision” then, he concludes justly, is St. Michael, termed Angel v. 163; and the Mount, he says, is styled *guarded* on account of the fortress. We however rather think that in the poet’s view, St. Michael himself, whom he represents looking out over the sea, kept watch and ward on the Mount.

So far was Warton able to advance, but “Namancos and Bayona’s hold” remained inaccessible to him. At length, in 1800, a writer in the Monthly Magazine conjectured that Namancos must have been intended for the ancient Numantia, near Tarragona, on the coast of Catalonia,† and that Milton had given a Spanish termination to the word. “I am aware,” he adds, “that this place is on the opposite side to Bayona; but let it be remembered that they are no common eyes that look upon the scene; they are no less than those of an archangel.” Dunster adopts this opinion, only adding that it was the French Bayonne, and not the Spanish Bayona that was meant, as “Milton scarcely meant to make his archangel look two ways at once.” Todd thought that Milton had adopted the orthography Namancos from some romance.

Finally, a literary friend of Mr. Todd’s happening to be turning over Mercator’s Atlas, met the very word

* This, and Spenser’s lines—

St. Michel’s Mount who does not know,

That *wards* the western coast?—*Shep. Cal.* vii. 41.

were probably Milton’s sole authority; his imagination did the rest.

† He must mean Saguntum (*Murviedro*), for Numantia was in Old Castile.

Namancos. In the map of Gallicia in that Atlas, and in the peninsula of Cape Finisterre, we find, about the site of the present Mujio, "Namancos T.", *i.e.* Turris. Bayona lies south of this, a little to the north of the Minho, and it was used, Mercator says, by the English merchants as a staple for their woollen cloths, whence probably its name was more familiar in Milton's time than it is now, and better known than perhaps any other name in the part of Gallicia opposite the Land's-end, except The Groine (*Coruña*), which was not a very poetic term. As Mercator's Atlas was a common book, he may have supposed the name Namancos to be generally known to persons of education.*

To prove to demonstration how utterly negligent of punctuation Milton was, we here give a passage of Lycidas exactly as it stands in the editions of 1615 and 1673, premising that it was far more correctly punctuated in the original edition of 1638:—

Bring the rathe Primrose that forsaken dies.
The tufted Crow-toe, and pale Gessamine,
The white Pink, and the Pansie freakt with jeat,
The glowing Violet.
The Musk-rose, and the well-attir'd Woodbine,
With Cowslips wan that hang the pensive hed,
And every flower that sad embroidery wears:
Bid *Amaranthus* all his beauty shed,
And Dafladillies fill their cups with tears,
To strew the Laureat Herse where Lycid lies.
For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise.
Ay me! Whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where ere thy bones are hurld,
Whether beyond, etc.

* Mr. Hunter (Milton, page 51) maintains that it was not Bayona, but a place near Cape Finisterre, of which is said, in a book of Pilotage, printed at Amsterdam, in 1662: "About a league to the eastward of

Here, it will be seen, there are periods instead of commas at *dies*, *violet*, and *surmise*; at the last there is a semi-colon in the edition of 1638,* but it should not be greater than a comma, as *surmise* connects with *whilst*, *Ay me!* being parenthetic.

By *wash far away* must be meant “lave at a great distance;” but the expression is ambiguous, for the proper meaning of *wash away* is, to remove by the action of water. It has sometimes occurred to us that the poet, who, as we have seen, was careless about punctuation, might have intended that there should be a full stop at *away*, and an address to Lycidas commence at *where'er*, to be interrupted by an aposiopesis at *Bayona's hold*, but that, as sometimes happens, he acquiesced in the punctuation given by the printer. If we do not deceive ourselves, the punctuation at which we have hinted would increase the force and vividness of the passage, which is in itself so very picturesque.

We cannot refrain from making a digression here on the state of our typography in former times. We have seen that Milton was utterly careless about punctuation, and that even a most important word could be omitted in one of his poems, without himself or his friend who read the proof-sheets becoming aware of it; and yet we are called upon to receive as almost immaculate the first folio

Cape de Finisterre, on the south side, lieth the haven of Seche or Corcovia, and is called by the Dutch shipmasters Coreke Bayone.” But no such place occurs on Mercator’s map, which was evidently Milton’s authority.

* The edition of 1638 reads the last four lines as follows:—

For so to interpose a little ease,
Let our frail thoughts dally with false surmise;
Ah me, whilst thee the shores and sounding seas
Wash far away, where'er thy bones are hurled, etc.

of Shakespeare's plays, printed after the death of the author, and edited by men who probably had never before in their lives corrected proof-sheets! * In fact, it is almost wonderful, all things considered, that we should have these divine dramas in so perfect a state as they are, and infinite is our obligation to Hemming and Condell; but still we must acknowledge that, as compared with the works of Spenser, Ben Jonson, and some others, they contain numerous errors, caused most probably by the ill-written manuscript that was placed in the printer's hands, † and the absence of the author's own supervision.

A compositor in a printing-office is to be regarded as a copyist. Speaking then from our own experience, in copying passages for this work, we would say that the errors he would be likely to commit, and which nothing but the eye of the author might be able to detect,—and that not always—are omission, addition, transposition, substitution. Of each of these we will give a few, out of many, examples from Shakespeare; not however with the remotest expectation of seeing any of our suggestions adopted.

We may notwithstanding venture to observe that, in our opinion, it would be more judicious in editors to insert in italics, or between brackets, the single words which have been suggested, with some probability of correctness, to supply omissions, rather than give lines so

* From the preface to Ferrall and Repp's Danish Dictionary, we learn that there are no Readers in the Royal Printing-office at Copenhagen. It was probably the same in London in the seventeenth century. In that case, the proof-sheets as sent to the author, from a respectable office, would be a favourable representation of the printed sheets of the folio of 1623.

† Compositors have to work against time: it is therefore little less than positive dishonesty to send illegible manuscript to the printer's.

inharmonious, that it is quite impossible the poet could have left them in that state. We would say the same with respect to transpositions; while additions and substitutions might be indicated in notes.

Omissions are sometimes of entire lines, or parts of lines, or of single words.* We will only give instances of the last.

Norway himself with terrible numbers *there*,
Assisted by that most disloyal traitor,
The thane of Cawdor.—*Macb.* i. 2.

Vaulting ambition, which o'erleaps itself,
And falls on the other *side*.—How now! What news?

Ib. i. 7.†

Now o'er the one half world
Nature seems dead, and wicked dreams abuse
The curtained sleep; *now* witchcraft celebrates ‡
Pale Hecate's offerings.—*Ib.* ii. 1.

Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself . . .
Within my sword's length set him.—If he seape
Then Heaven forgive him too.—This tune goes manly.

Ib. iv. 3.

Let me *then* tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemned to have an itching palm.

Jul. Cæs. iv. 3.

This but done,
Even as she speaks, why, *all* their hearts were yours.

Coriol. iii. 2.

* The last, as in the following example, frequently takes place at the end of lines. Pope supplied an entire line in Coriolanus, and Mr. Collier's corrector several, some not unhappily.

† There is no interruption: Macbeth pauses and muses for a moment before his lady enters.

‡ Mr. Collier thinks the imperfect line more expressive! “We have no right,” he says, “to attempt to improve Shakespeare’s versification; if he thought fit to leave the line here with nine syllables, as he has done in other instances, some people may consider him wrong, but nobody ought to venture to correct him.” But we say it was the printer, or copyist, not Shakespeare, that made the lines imperfect.

But that the dread of something after death,
I' the undiscovered country, from whose bourne
 No traveller returns, puzzles the will.—*Ham.* iii. 1.*

Rightly to be great
 Is not, *not* to stir without great argument,
 But greatly to find quarrel in a straw
 When honour's at the stake.—*Ib.* iv. 4.

He must observe their mood on whom he jests,
 The quality of persons, and the time,
 And *not*, like the haggard, check at every feather
 That comes before his eye.—*Twelfth Night*, iii. 1.†

The following seem to be additions:—

I'll *go* to him, and undertake to bring him in peace.

Coriol. iii. 1.

So they *doubly* redoubled blows upon the foe.—*Macb.* i. 2.

A medicine *that's* able to breathe life into a stone.

All's Well, ii. 1.

Transpositions will restore the verse in the following instances:—

Well-fitted in arts, glorious in arms.—*Love's Lab. Lost*, ii. 1.

In arts well-fitted, glorious in arms.

* By the omission, as we may say, of a single letter here, a country is made a thing, or rather an event. Can any one produce a parallel? We cannot. We are required to believe the printers and editors of the folio Shakespeare to have been nearly impeccable, while in the accurately printed first edition of *Paradise Lost* we find the very word in question omitted:—

Is heard no more [*in*] heaven, he of the first.—v. 656;
 and in a single page (180) of the third edition we meet *heav'n* for *heav'd*. and—

Satiate with [*genial*] moisture, when God said.—vii. 202.

Wave rolling after wave, where [*way*] they found.—*Ib.* 298.

† We wonder how this could have escaped any critic. It did not escape Mr. Collier's corrector. Some of this person's emendations are very good, as “Aristotle's *ethics*,” for “Aristotle's *checks*.”—*Tam. of Shrew*, i. 1; others are very poor and prosaic. For “and a table of green

And the true blood, which *peeps fairly* through it.

Winter's Tale, iv. 3.

And the true blood, which *fairly peeps* through it.

'Tis but the boldness of his hand *haply*,

Which his heart was not consenting to.—*All's Well*, iii. 2.

'Tis *haply* but the boldness of his hand,

To which his heart was not consenting, *madam*.

No, some of it for my *child's father*.—*As You Like It*, i. 3.

No, some of it for my *father's child*.*

But makes one pardon strong.—*I pardon him*

With all my heart.—A god on earth thou art.—*Rich. II.* v. 3.

But makes one pardon strong.—*With all my heart*

I pardon him.—A god on earth thou art.

Almost with *ravished listening*, could not find.

Hen. VIII. i. 2.

Almost with *listening ravished*, could not find.

Of substitution, the cases are numerous, and this is in effect the great cause of the difficulties in Shakespeare. Indeed, we think it might be almost laid down as a rule, that a passage, to give a meaning to which astuteness is requisite in the critic, cannot be as it came from the pen of the poet. His text, if we had it pure, would, we are convinced, present no critical difficulties whatever.

The substituted word resembles the true one, sometimes in form, sometimes in meaning.†

fields,” (*Hen. V.* iii. 3,) he reads, “on a table of green *frieze*:” Theobald, “and a’ *babbled* of green *fields*,” and it is difficult to decide between them. Would not *talk’d* have given *table* more readily than *babbled*?

* This was first proposed by Coleridge, and is confirmed by Mr. Collier’s corrector, and by common sense.

† Of this last case, the following are indubitable examples.

In the *Faery Queen* (ii. 2, 42) we meet with the following line:—

A yearly solemn feast she wont to *make*,

to which the rimes are *bold*, *told*. Now it is quite plain that the poet wrote, and the compositor read, *bold*, but that the word changed in his

Brach Merriman, the poor cur is embossed.

Taming of Shrew, Induct.

Here the true word is *bathe*, as many have seen, *bathing*, or fomenting, being the exact cure for an *embossing*, or swelling. Would any sportsman say *Hound Merriman* of one of the dogs?

I will depart in quiet,
And, in despite of *mirth*, mean to be merry.

Com. of Errors, iii. 1.

For *mirth* read *my wife*.

I would not, in plain terms, from this time forth,
Have you so *slander any moment leisure*,
As to give words or talk with the lord Hamlet.—*Ham.* i. 3.

Read *squander any moment's leisure*.*

I *wrote* good creature: wheresoe'er she is,
Her heart weighs heavy.—*All's Well, iii. 5.*

As no critic has made, or can make, any sense of *wrote* in this place, should we not substitute *wote*, or rather, *warrant*, and read—

I *wote* [or *warrant*], good creature, wheresoc'er she is,
Her heart weighs heavy?

And it does indifferent well in a *dam'd*-coloured stock.

Twelfth Night, i. 3.

mind as he was at work. The proof-sheet also was probably read by Spenser himself. We also meet (ii. 2, 7) *chace* as the rime to *day*, *dismay* and (v. 4, 7) *near*, *to few*.

Rossetti, in his *Amor Platonico* (p. 912), when transcribing a canzone from Petrarea, wrote,—

Mi si scoperse, onde mi nacque un *gelo*.

The word before his eyes was *ghiaccio*, and the rime *braccio*, and yet he did not discern the error, even in the proof-sheet.

Nothing could be more satisfactory than the manner in which the proofs of the present work have come to the author; they have been exact copies of the MS. Among the very few variations was *the* for *some*. Now, as the word was very legibly written, the very same thing must have occurred as in the printing of the *Faery Queen*: as *the* made very good sense, perhaps no one but the author himself would have suspected it, and even *he* had to refer to the MS.

* The very same correction was made by Mr. Collier's corrector.

Pope proposed “*flame-coloured*,” which has been generally followed. Our own conjectures have been *dun*, *damask*, *dainty*, and we incline to prefer the last, as Sir Andrew speaks afterwards of the Clown’s “*mellifluous* voice;” *daintie*, badly written, might easily look like *dam’d*.

The three following passages, we are convinced, never came in their present form from the pen of Shakespeare.

Come thick night,
And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell,
That my keen knife see not the wound it makes,
Nor Heaven *peep* through the *blanket* of the dark.
To cry, Hold, hold!—*Macb.* i. 5.

At no time could the image in the fourth line have been otherwise than low and ludicrous; and surely no good poet, having mentioned the *mantle* of night, would repeat the image, under at least a meaner form. We would hazard—

Nor Heaven *peer* through the *blackness* of the dark.

Peer or *pear* is *appear*, and *blackness of dark* is like *brightness of light*.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
The slings and arrows of outrageous Fortune,
Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
And by opposing end them.—*Ham.* iii. 1.

A good poet usually has the image present to his mind; and the idea of taking arms against a sea! It reminds one of Dame Partington. *A siege* was our own conjecture, as well as Pope’s; others have proposed *assay*. We should prefer *assays* to this last.

Spread thy close curtain, love-performing night,
That *runaways'* eyes may wink, and Romeo
Leap to these arms, untalked of and unseen.

Rom. and Jul. iii. 2.

Various have been the conjectures here: our own is *Rumour's*. In the Induction to 2 Henry IV., and elsewhere, Rumour answers to the Fame of the classics, who is described in the *Aeneis*, as being on the watch at night to collect intelligence to be blazed abroad by day, and *wink* plainly intimates that there was some one on the watch to detect the lovers. Juliet then wishes the gloom to be so intense, that Rumour's eyes must wink perforce, and Romeo thus be able to leap to her arms unseen. The play of words on Rumour and Romeo, and the allusion to Virgil, would suit with the turn of the poet's mind at that period.*

The punctuation of the folios is of course often erroneous. The following instance, we believe, has not been observed :†—

Hang out our banners on the outer walls;
The cry is still: They come.—*Macb.* v. 5.

Now, as the banner was hung from the keep, not from the walls, we surely should read :—

Hang out our banners. On the outer walls
The cry is still: They come.

From a close examination of Shakespeare's verse, we will venture to assert, that he never used a short line, except at the beginning or end of a paragraph or complete sentence; and that when such occurs,—unless where part of a line has been lost,—it is caused by wrong arrange-

* In Peele's *Edward I.* are the two following lines, of which the most accomplished editor, Mr. Dyce, owns he could make no sense:—

Saint Ceres' sweets and *Bacchus' wine*.—*Page 92, ed. Dyce.*

Thank Britain's strife of Scotland's climbing peers.—*Ib. p. 104.*

We would read *Sans, wheat*, and *Th'ambitious*.

† This observation is not our own; we learned it in conversation. We should feel inclined to write *banner*, as printers are sometimes rather liberal of their *s's*.

ment, and can be easily rectified.* Two of these short lines sometimes happened to meet, as—

This guest of summer,
The temple-haunting martlet doth approve,
By this loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here.—No jutting, friese,
Buttress, nor coigne of vantage, but this bird
Has made his pendent bed and procreant cradle.—*Macb.* i. 6.

The actor should, we think, pause at *here*, and take a survey of the castle, before he proceeds.

The figure Aposiopesis occurs in Shakespeare, as in all poets, ancient and modern, whose style is at all dramatic. By its aid, as we have shown in various places of Virgil and Horace, many grammatical difficulties may be removed. The critics seem not to have observed it in—

I do profess,
That for your Highness' good I ever laboured,
More than my own, that am, have, and will be . . .
Though all the world, etc.—*Hen. VIII.* iii. 2.

He was a man, take him for all in all . . .
I shall not look upon his like again.—*Ham.* i. 2.

He is about to give a character of his father, when grief stops him.

The dram of evil
Doth all the noble substance, of a doubt,
To his own scandal . . . Look, my lord! it comes.—*Ib.*

He has been all along speaking in an involved, circuitous manner, to conceal his feelings, and he has not finished his sentence when the Ghost appears.

We adopt the reading of the Quarto of 1604, reading for *eale*, *evil*, as it has (ii. 1) *deale* for *devil*. It might

* Editors in general seem not to have recollected that our dramatic verse admits of frequent anapaests. See below, on the *Verse of Paradise Lost*.

however be *ill*, i. e. *c'il*, from *evil*, like *e'en* from *even*. *Of a doubt* is like *of a truth*, etc. Query, *out o' doubt*?

The printers frequently made verses short and inharmonious by their abbreviations, and it is really annoying to see how slavishly editors follow them. Thus, for example, we meet *it's* and *'tis*, instead of *it is*, *'s* instead of *his*, *to* instead of *unto*, and the syncopated instead of the full perfect of the verb, as *lov'd*, *enjoy'd*, etc.*

To conclude. There are various places in Shakespeare where verse has been printed as prose.† This appears from the ease with which they can be arranged as verse, a thing which cannot be done with true prose. In All's Well, etc. iii. 2, for example, there are two letters both in prose, of one of which no ingenuity could make verse, while the other would be arranged as follows:—

“When thou canst get the ring upon my finger
Which never shall come off, and show me a child
Begotten of thy body, that I am father to,
Then call me husband. But in such a *then*
I write a *never*.”—This is a dreadful sentence.

So again in Romeo and Juliet, iii. 1:—

Good king of cats,
Nothing but one of your nine lives, that I
Mean to make bold withal, and, as you shall
Use me hereafter, dry-beat the rest of the eight.

* Thus in Milton's own editions we meet:—

Gather'd like scum and *setl'd* to itself.—*Comus*, 595.

Self-fed and self-*consum'd*, if this fail.—*Ib.* 597.

No editor has retained this orthography; but, had it been Shakespeare, it would have been sacred in the eyes of critics.

† In the Tempest, Caliban *always* speaks in blank verse; for, as he had been taught language by Prospero, he can only speak as *he* speaks. When will the wonderful judgement of Shakespeare, which Jonson discerned so clearly, be generally recognized! Hotspur also speaks throughout in verse in 1 Hen. IV. iii. 1.

Will you pluck your sword out of his pilcher by
The ears? Make haste, lest mine be about your ears,
Ere it be out.

Every other place might with the same ease be converted to verse.

We may here inform the reader, that in all our metric criticisms, we go on the principle, which to us has the force of an axiom, that no true poet can write inharmonious verses. The very last whom we should suspect of such is Shakespeare, one of whose leading characteristics is sweetness,—as we believe Coleridge has somewhere observed,—and whose early verse, as in the Two Gentlemen of Verona and the Midsummer Night's Dream, is actually mellifluous.*

We now return to Milton, and observe that with Lycidas terminated the series of beautiful poetry, of which Horton witnessed the birth. His next verses were written in a foreign country, and in a foreign language.

THE ITALIAN SONNETS.

Milton had been familiar with the works of the great poets of modern Italy, probably from an early age; and, for an ear like his, the melody of Italian verse must have had peculiar charms. During his residence in Florence, he even ventured to essay his powers in the composition of verses in that language, which were probably received with the indulgence due to the poetic efforts of a man of

* All the preceding observations apply with as much force to Beaumont and Fletcher as to Shakespeare. We regret that their able editor, Mr. Dyce, has not more frequently ventured to restore the harmony of their verse,—at least to indicate the restoration. In too many places, also, verse remains printed as prose, while the fact is, there is hardly any real prose in the great majority of their Plays.

genius in an idiom not his own, and were honoured with the approbation of his learned Italian friends. When publishing his Poems in 1645, he inserted among them five Sonnets and a short Canzone in the language of Italy.

Johnson says of these pieces, “I have heard them commended by a man well qualified to decide their merit.” The person he meant was Baretti, and his opinion has, we believe, been the prevalent one ever since, and as far as regards the poetry it is evidently just. But it always struck us in reading these poems, that they had the fault common and almost inevitable to modern Latin poetry, namely, that of confounding the language and style of different periods ; that, in fact, though written in the middle of the seventeenth century, they presented forms peculiar to Dante and the poets of the fourteenth century. We therefore marked the passages in which we thought we had discerned this fault, and then submitted them to the criticism of our friend, the late Gabriele Rossetti, himself a poet of a high order, and inferior to none in the critical knowledge of the poetry of his native language. In every instance our conjectures were right. In our notes on these poems we have given our friend’s observations : his concluding remark is as follows :—

“Io per me mene uscirei con poche parole, dicendo che lo scrivere in lingua straniera è stato per Milton un’ audacia di cui il solo successo potrebbe giustificarlo ; ma che sventuratamente non è così.”

These and two Latin poems were the products of the Miltonic muse in the bright regions of the South. After his return to England, and during a space of more than twenty years, all that he has left us is a few sonnets, some translations, and two more Latin poems.

SONNET VIII.

Captain, or Colonel, or knight in arms.

When, in 1642, the King's forces had advanced to Brentford, and it was expected that he would make an attack on the city, and not without a fair prospect of success, Milton, revolving in his mind the events which often occurred in such cases, composed the following ideal address to the conquerors. The poet was at this time residing in his garden-house in Aldersgate Street.

This sonnet is one of the two which Johnson allowed to be "not bad;" Warton terms it one of his best; the same was the opinion of Wordsworth.

SONNET IX.

Lady that in the prime of earliest youth.

As this and the following sonnet both appeared in the edition of his Poems in 1645, they must have been written before that year, and the most likely date appears to be 1644. We know not who this "virtuous young lady" was; but it is not impossible that she may have been the Miss Davis to whom he paid his addresses when his wife had deserted him. If such was the case, we may regard it as a piece of grave and elegant religious courtship, and it gives a high idea of the lady's virtues, at least in the eyes of her admirer.

SONNET X.

Daughter to that good Earl, once President.

The person to whom this sonnet is addressed was the Lady Margaret Ley, daughter of Sir James Ley, who being an able lawyer had risen through the great posts of the Law under James I., who created him Earl of

Marlborough, and made him Lord High Treasurer and President of the Council. He died on the 14th of March, 1628-9; and as the last Parliament which King Charles convoked previous to entering on his course of reckless despotism was dissolved only four days previously, Milton chooses to ascribe his death to grief at that event. Lady Margaret was married to Captain Hobson, of the Isle of Wight; and Milton, when deserted by his wife, was a frequent visitor at their house in London. The sonnet is a pleasing composition, and we do not discern in it any defects.

SONNETS XI. XII.

*A book was writ of late called Tetrachordon.
I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs.*

These two sonnets were written apparently in 1645, on account of the reception which his works on the subject of divorce had met with from the Presbyterians, who were then in power. The first expresses his contempt and dislike of the Scots; the second, his scorn of those who claimed a liberty for themselves which they would not accord to others. On account probably of their personal and political character, he did not insert them in his edition of his Poems; he printed them however in 1673. Johnson says of them, “The first is contemptible, and the second not excellent.” To show his aversion to the sonnet, as a mode of poetic composition, he gives the former as the specimen of it in his Dictionary.

SONNET XIII. (XIV.)

When Faith and Love which parted from thee never.

This sonnet, which first appeared in the edition of

1673, is inscribed in the Cambridge MS. “On the religious memory of Mrs. Catherine Thomson, my Christian friend, deceased 16 Decemb. 1646.” When it was written Milton was living at his house in Barbican. Who Mrs. Thomson was (for it is plain from v. 5 that she was married), is quite uncertain. Newton, observing that when Milton was made Latin Secretary (in 1648) he went to lodge at one Thomson’s at Charing Cross, thinks that she may have been one of this family. It may have been so, but we have no proof of it. The sonnet is excellent, redolent of pure and exalted religion.

SONNETS XIV. XV. (XX. XXI.)

Lawrence, of virtuous father virtuous son.

Cyriac, whose grandsire on the royal banch.

It might seem that, after the death of his father, Milton, who probably found no great pleasure in the insipid society of his wife, used to hold social meetings (perhaps at taverns), with some of his more intellectual friends, where their conversation was enlivened by wine and music, Henry Lawes being probably one of the party. Possibly, however, these sonnets might have been written during his bachelor-days, and he regarded them as of too personal a nature to be printed among his Poems. In composing them he had evidently some of Horace’s odes in view, and candour must acknowledge that he is very far from attaining, if he sought it, to the ease and gaiety of the Sabine bard. We have above noticed Lawrence and Skinner among Milton’s friends.

SONNET XVI. (XIII.)

Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song.

The date of this sonnet in Milton’s MS. is February 5,

1645-6, though the work to which it alludes was not published till 1648. Possibly the poet, knowing that the work was in preparation, got his sonnet ready for presentation on its appearance. It is not one of Milton's best productions, but it is a pleasing testimony to the talents and merits of a friend.

In our account of Henry Lawes, given in the First Part of this work, we observed that Dr. Burney spoke slightlying of him as a composer. We will here give the opposite opinion of a learned and scientific musician on Lawes and on Milton's sonnet, which is, we believe, equivalent to that of Burney.

Of Milton's sonnet I would say, that it is the language of simple truth, and sound and discriminating criticism, conveyed in the dress of poetry. Milton sees, knows, describes his friend's peculiar excellence. He is the exception to the general rule. Other writers, ancient or modern, in prose or in poetry, rarely speak of music without betraying their ignorance of it. They deal in vague generalities, or, if they attempt anything more, blunder. Milton, whenever he speaks of music—and how often does the divine Art present itself to his mind!—is always strictly, technically correct. Whoever is acquainted with Henry Lawes' music, and especially whoever compares it with the compositions of his predecessors, will see the truth and discrimination of Milton's commendation. Lawes was one of the earliest of the English melodists—the father of that style of writing which was successively cultivated by Purcell, Eccles, Weldon, Howard, Boyce, Battishill, Arnold, and Shield; and, in that department of his art, was in no respect behind his Italian contemporaries, Cesti, Caccini, and Cavalli.

In this sonnet Milton alludes to Lawes' Cantata “Theseus and Ariadne;” for as a marginal note—not preserved in modern editions of it—to the eleventh line these words are added, “The story of Ariadne by him set to Musick.” This composition Milton must have seen in MS., for it was not published till 1653, seven years after he wrote his sonnet. I mention this as an accidental proof of the intimacy that continued between Lawes and

Milton. We may picture to ourselves (what no doubt happened) the two friends trying this composition over,—Lawes inviting, and Milton giving his opinion on its merits previous to publication.*

SONNET XVII.

Because ye have thrown off your prelate-lord.

When Presbyterianism was established in England, the ministers of that most intolerant creed began to enforce it with the utmost rigour on the reluctant people. Milton, who had both public and private reasons for disliking the Presbyterians, discharged this sonnet against them, probably in 1646 or 1647. It is the only specimen in our language of what the Italians call the *Sonetto con coda* which Berni used; but he was probably not the inventor of it, as three sonnets of this kind appear among those of Ariosto, which however could not have been known to Milton, as they were not published till the eighteenth century. This kind of sonnet was used by the Italians only on humorous and satirical subjects. Milton adheres closely to the Italian model in its structure.

SONNET XVIII. (XV.)

Fairfax, whose name in arms through Europe rings.

Five of Milton's sonnets,—namely, the present, that to Cromwell, the two to Cyriac Skinner, and that to Sir Henry Vane,—were, for obvious reasons, omitted in the edition of 1673. They were first printed after the Re-

* Some unrecorded Passages in the Life of John Milton, by Edward Taylor, Gresham Professor of Musie, in the Christian Reformer for January, 1846. Mr. Taylor further observes, as a proof of Milton's freedom from party rancour, that the "Choice Psalms" to which this sonnet was prefixed was dedicated to "His most Sacred Majestie, Charles, by the grace of God," etc.

volution, by Phillips, in his Life of Milton, in 1694. It appears from the poet's MS. that this sonnet was addressed to Fairfax, at the siege of Colchester in 1648. It respires the dignity of virtue and public spirit, and was admired by Wordsworth.

SONNET XIX. (XVI.)

Cromwell, our chief of men, who through a cloud.

In Milton's MS. this sonnet is inscribed "To the Lord General Cromwell, May, 1652. *On the Proposals of certain Ministers at the Committee for Propagation of the Gospel.*" Like the preceding, it is directed against the Presbyterians, whom Milton hated. Warton, with all his prejudices, owns that "there is great dignity both of sentiment and expression in this sonnet." Wordsworth also admired it.

SONNET XX. (XVII.)

Vane, young in years, but in sage counsel old.

In the MS. there is neither date nor title to this sonnet. As it seems to be directed against the Presbyterians, Warton thinks it was written about the same time as that to Cromwell.

SONNET XXI. (XIX.)

When I consider how my light is spent.

Milton, as we have seen, became totally blind in 1653, or early in 1654. It is probable therefore that it was soon after that event, while the calamity was fresh on him, that he composed this noble sonnet, replete with pious humility and resignation. It is remarkable that this and the following sonnet, and that addressed to Lawrence, do not appear in the Cambridge MS.

SONNET XXII. (XVIII.)

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughtered saints, whose bones.

In 1655, the Duke of Savoy commenced a barbarous persecution of the Valdenses, his Protestant subjects in the valleys of Piedmont, to make them embrace Popery, or quit their country. Cromwell exerted himself nobly in their favour ; and Milton, as Latin Secretary, wrote on this occasion several letters in his name. His mind dwelling on the subject gave birth to this fine sonnet.

SONNET XXIII. (XXII.)

Cyriac, this three years' day these eyes, though clear.

The date of this sonnet is, of course, 1656, or early in 1657. Like that on his blindness, it breathes the spirit of resignation, but, as being addressed to another, in a bolder tone.

SONNET XXIV. (XXIII.)

Methought I saw my late espoused saint.

This, the last of Milton's short poetic compositions, was probably written in February, 1658, as his second wife died in the early part of that month. Even Johnson allowed, that it was "not bad ;" other critics are unanimous in praising it.

Hayley and Todd have compared with this sonnet, *Laura mia sacra* of Petrarcha (II. Son. 78), and *Quando de minhas magoas* of Camões (Son. 72). They might have added *Levommi il mio pensier*, the most famous of Petrarcha's sonnets, for it is at least a day-dream, and the *Dormendo un giorno, in sonno mi parea*, of Boccaccio. We do not see any traces of imitation on the part of Milton, and he probably was only acquainted with the sonnets of Petrarcha.

TRANSLATIONS.

Every reader of the prose works of Milton must have observed in them the total absence of those passages from the ancients in the original languages, which occur in the text, or fill the margins, of other writers of the time. Milton, on the contrary, always translates his quotations, not only in prose but in verse. For this purpose he employs blank verse, even in versions from Dante and Petrarcha; while, if there was already an English translation, he does not disdain to use it. Thus in two quotations from Ariosto, he gives the one exactly, the other somewhat altered from Sir John Harrington's translation of the *Orlando Furioso*;* and we may be quite sure, that had he had occasion to quote from Tasso, it would have been from Fairfax's translation.

In the spring of the year 1648, Milton translated nine of the Psalms (lxxx.—lxxxviii.) into English verse; and so anxious was he about fidelity, that he printed in a different character the words which the necessity of the verse obliged him to add. In the early part of the month of August, 1653, he translated eight more (i.—viii.), but not with the same solicitude. From his thus rendering them consecutively, it is not unlikely that he meditated a translation of the entire book of Psalms.

The only translation which we possess of an entire poem by Milton from the classic languages, is that of the Ode of Horace to Pyrrha, “rendered almost word for word, without rime, according to the Latin measure, as

* Harrington's version of the altered passage is as follows:—

Then by a fair green mountain he did pass,
That once smelt sweet, but now it stinks perdie,
This was that gift—be it said without offence—
That Constantine gave Silvester long since.

near as the language will admit," as he informs us in the title prefixed to it in the edition of 1673, where it first appeared. It was probably therefore made after 1645, but it is uncertain when ; probably while he was still engaged in teaching.

The remark of its being made "according to the Latin measure," is of importance, as it shows that even Milton was ignorant, or negligent, of the proper metric mode of reading Greek and Latin poetry. His version has not the slightest resemblance to the original, according to its scansion, but a very strong one if we read it in the manner usual in our schools, and in those of Italy ; in Germany it is different. Thus we read the first stanza as follows :—

Quis múlta grácelis te púer in rósa
Perfúsus líquidis úrguet odóribús
Gráto, Pyrrha, sub ántro ?
Cui flávam réligas cómam ?*

With this the measure of the translation very nearly accords :—

What slénder yoúth, bedéw'd with líquid ódours,
Coúrts thee on róses ín some pleásant cáve,
Pyrrha ? for whóm bindest thou
In wreáths thy gólden haír ?†

We have said that Milton did not understand the exact sense of this Ode, and let us not be accused of presumption when we add, that not a single one of the editors of Horace appears to us to have understood it.

* The proper metric accentuation is,—

Quís multá gracilís té puer ín rosá
Pér fusús líquidís úrguet odóribús
Gráto Pýrrha sub ántro ?
Cuí flavám religás comám ?

† This stanza is in reality the three last lines unrimed of a Spenserian stanza.

This we shall presently attempt to show, but we will first point out some of Milton's errors.

The Latin *urguet* is not correctly rendered by *courts*, which is not at all suitable to the position which the critics, and of course Milton, assign the lovers. *In wreaths* does not, we think, accurately express the mode in which the Roman ladies dressed their hair: *religas* (an intensive verb) rather indicates that it was in tresses tightly fastened round the head. *Simplear munditiis* is, in our opinion, better expressed by Milton's “plain in thy neatness,” than by Warton’s “plain in your ornaments;” for *munditiæ* never meant earrings, necklaces, etc. ‘Simply neat and elegant’ seems to be the meaning of the phrase, and the poet may have had her hair alone in view, as Ovid says,—

Munditiis capimur; nec sint sine lege capilli.

Milton perhaps was not aware that *mutatam* was to be understood with *sidem*, or that *aspera* was i. q. *asperata*, roughened;* *emiror*, as being intensive, is to gaze on with utter amazement, and not merely to admire; and fallacious, deceiving, and not flattering, is the meaning of *fultax*. Finally, *potens maris* is simply ruler of the sea, and *sternness* formed no part of the sea-god's character.

After having already transgressed by digression, we have hardly the courage to venture on a second offence. Yet, relying on the indulgence of the reader, we will here insert a comment on this Ode of our favourite classic poet, which has been lying in our *scrinia* these many years,—our last dealing with the Classics.

* See our Virgil, *Excurs. IX.*

HORACE. CARM. I. 5.

I have been always of the opinion, that those Odes of Horace which are addressed to persons with significant Greek names, are purely ideal, mere fancy-pieces ; of which species of composition there is far more in Latin literature than is usually supposed. Such, for example, is, I think, the Amores of Ovid, and such of course is the present Ode.

The critics in general suppose the youth and Pyrrha to be lying — *solus cum sola*, as Orelli expresses it from Terence—on a bed of roses in a grotto, and that Horace foretells that she will prove faithless to him, as she had done to himself. Lord Kaines further remarked, that in vv. 9, 10, the allegory is broken, contrary to the principles of taste, to which objection the critics have made no valid reply. My own opinion is that all these suppositions are wrong. The ancients knew nothing of beds of roses ; Horace's sense of delicacy and propriety was such, that in speaking of love elsewhere in his Odes, he never even hints at anything improper ; and in those to imaginary ladies, like Pyrrha, he is always scrupulously delicate ; and finally, he was of too fine a taste and too well acquainted with the rules of composition to violate them by breaking an allegory. My idea is, that the scene is an *epulæ* in a grotto — a thing which, as Orelli tells us, is customary at the present day,—in which Pyrrha lies on the same *lectus*, or sofa, with her lover ; that it is the uncertainty of her temper, and not her infidelity, of which the poet speaks, and that the allegory which commences in v. 5 is preserved unbroken to the end, the parallels being the surface of the sea and the countenance of the lady. The following commentary on the Ode will, I hope, justify these assertions.

In multa rosa. “ Non de coronis cogitandum, sed de lecto rosa-rum cumulo strato, id quod potissimum demonstrat v. *multa*, quod de corona acceptum prope ridiculum foret : tum præpos. *in* quæ item de corona usurpari non poterat.” (Or.) Now Horace, like the other ancient poets, when speaking of his own times, always gives their manners and usages correctly, and surely no one can suppose that roses were so abundant at Rome that beds could be formed of their leaves, covering the floor of a grotto ; for that is the view of the critics. On the contrary, Cicero (Verr. v. 11) gives as an instance of the enormous luxury of Verres, that he had a pillow stuffed with them. The following place, however, is quoted from Ælian (Var. Hist. ix. 24) :—*φύλλοις ρόδων ἐπαναπεστῶν* (*Σμινδυρίδης ὁ*

Συβαρίτης) καὶ κοιμηθεὶς ἐπ' αὐτὸν, ἔξανέστη λέγων φλυκταίνας ἐκ τῆς εὐνῆς ἔχειν. But Sybaris was before the times of history, and to the later Greeks it was a sort of Pays de Cocagne, about whose luxury all kinds of fables (this among the rest) were invented. Another place which is cited is the following from Philostratus (Ep. 27) : καί σου δέομαι οὐ στεφανοῦσθαι μόνον, ἀλλὰ καὶ κοιμηθῆναι ἐπὶ ρόδων, which at most can only allude to a pillow like that of Verres. The *in rosa jaceat* of Seneca (Ep. 36, 9) is only a supposed ease, and the *in odoribus jacet* of the same writer (Ep. 82, 2) evidently refers to the anointing of the dead body. These are, I believe, all the proofs that have been produced by the advocates of the bed of roses. On the other side, in opposition to Orelli's strange assertion respecting the use of *in*, may be adduced, εἰ ζόμηρος μετ' εὐμονσίας αἱὲ δὲ ἐν στεφάνοισιν εἴην, Eur. Herc. Fur. 677. κοσμεῖν ἔαντας, μὴ ἐν πλέγμασιν, ἢ χρυσῷ ἢ μαργαρίταις, 1 Tim. ii. 9. *Et caput in verna semper habere rosa*, Prop. iii. 3, 44. *In jaculis et pelle Libystidis ursae*, Virg. Aen. v. 37. *In viola aut in rosa dicere*, Cic. Tusc. v. 26. *Potentem in rosa*, Id. Fin. ii. 20 (these last two given by Orelli himself), *in armis*, etc. In fact this use of *in* runs through most languages. We ourselves say, a lady in a cap, in a veil, in her hair, etc.; and the French *en chapeau*, etc.; so also in Italian and Spanish. As to *multa*, I see not any force in Orelli's objection. *Multus* thus used in the singular is *many a*, and here it is used to intimate that the wreath of roses was a large full one. For the use of roses for this purpose, see Carm. i. 36, 15; ii. 3, 14; iii. 15, 15, *et alib.* I further think that *in multa rosa* should be joined with *puer*, and not with *te*, as she was apparently simply in her hair.—*Perfusus*, etc. This shows that it was an *epulæ*, for it was only on such occasions that the Romans in general put fragrant liquids or unguents on their hair: comp. ii. 7, 7, 22; 11, 16; iii. 29, 4, *et alib.* These were usually supplied by the person who gave the entertainment.—*Urguet*. I do not believe that a single instance can be produced of the use of this verb in the sense of “arte amplectitur.” (Or.) Its meaning is to press or push from or against, and I conceive that here it signifies ‘lies close to,’ sc. on the *lectus* or sofa. We should say, *sits* close to. The youth and Pyrrha, as we have said, occupied the same sofa, and he lay above her.—*Sub antro*, i. q. *in antro*, see my note on Ov. Fast. i. 186. For this custom see Ov. Fast. ii. 315 seq.: Tac. Ann. iv. 59.

We now come to the figure in which he likens Pyrrha to the

sea, and we may observe that the allusion to her name (already made in *flavam comam*), is still kept up.—*fidem*, sc. *mutatam*. It applies to the sea, as well as to the lady; for *fides* is the ground of trust, reliance, confidence. Virgil uses *infidum marmor*, Geor. i. 254, and *fides pelagi*, Æn. iii. 69, of the sea; compare Æn. v. 849; and Isocrates has, in prose, *τὴν ἀπιστίαν τοῦ πολέμου*, Archid. § 21.—*nigris*, as opposed to the *aurea* of v. 9.—*æquora*, i. q. *æquor*, the surface of the sea, i. e. her countenance.—*fruitur*. This verb may be used of the sea, as well as of porticoes, Ep. i. 1, 71.—*aurea*. This may allude to the colour of her hair, as well as to the serenity of her countenance, and the blandness of her manners. Propertius has (iv. 7, 85) *aurea Cynthia*, and Tibullus (i. 6, 58) *auream anum*. As applied to the sea, it may denote its splendour in the rays of the sun. *Aureus* is used of *sol*, *luna*, and *aether*, denoting brightness.—*vacuam*, sc. *a rentis*, v. 7, of the sea; *irarum*, the tempest of the mind, of Pyrrha, the *tristes Amaryllidos iras* of Virgil, that is, bursts of temper.—*amabilem* (*ἐρατευόν*). In iii. 13, 10, he has *frigus amabile*, and Virgil (Geor. iv. 478) has *palus inamabilis*. Why not then *mare amabile*? In prose, Cicero has (ad Fam. xvi. 18) *Tusculanum erit amabilius*. The French use their *aimable* in a similar manner, as *aimable grotte*, and we ourselves say, a *lovely* landscape, bay, sheet of water, etc.—*Sperat*, expects to be.—*fallacis*, i. e. that may deceive, go contrary to his expectations; the uncertainty of her temper.—*intentata*, untried, not embarked on: comp. Virg. Buc. iv. 32; with respect to her, having had no experience of her changeful mood.—*nites*. As to the applicability of this to the calm surface of the sea in the solar beams, there can be no dispute. It also expresses the serenity of her countenance, and the lustre of her hair and eyes. If the Æsopic fable of the Shepherd and the Sea be as old as the times of Horace, I should suspect him to have had it in his mind. At all events he may have thought of these verses of Lucretius (v. 1002):

Nec poterat quemquam placidi pellacia ponti
Subdola pellicere in fraudem ridentibus undis.

The remainder is easy. Horace says, that he himself had embarked on this apparently calm and tranquil sea, and that such a tempest had arisen, that he had hardly made his escape from the waves in which he was overwhelmed.*

* In another of Horace's Odes (ii. 17), the critics seem to have missed

SAMSON AGONISTES.

Though this was, in all likelihood, the last composed of all Milton's poems, we place our notice of it here, as, on account of its being of so different a nature from the heroic poems, and so totally unconnected with them, it would have been incongruous to have treated of them together.

Samson Agonistes was first published in 1671, along with *Paradise Regained*; which last poem, as we have seen, was finished in 1666. As it is probable that the mind of Milton could not remain in a state of inaction, we may suppose that it reverted to his former idea of composing dramas in the Greek manner, on sacred subjects; and that of Samson, though not included in the list which he had drawn up, may, from the resemblance of the fortunes of that hero to his own, have led to his giving it the preference to any of the fine subjects contained in that list, formed ere the clouds of misfortune had descended on his head. Would that he had devoted to them the time and labour wasted on now-neglected controversies!

Samson was a hero raised up by Heaven to be a chief instrument in freeing his country from the yoke of the idolatrous Philistines; in his simplicity he united himself in marriage with a daughter of that race, and the consequence was his blindness, his captivity, and his living to find all his work undone, and Israel, from its own want of virtue and energy, still in bondage. Milton viewed himself also as raised up by Heaven to vindicate the

the exact sense. Indeed one might almost fancy they took *columen* for *columna*. The figure is that Mæcenas and Horace formed an edifice, of which the former was the roof, without which the latter was of little worth.

cause of religious, civil, and domestic liberty, against tyranny and superstition. In this cause he had long laboured with energy and with success, and in it he had lost his sight; he had lived to find all his work undone, civil and religious despotism once more triumphant, and the nation crouching beneath them, and himself in a state of what might be viewed as bondage, as he could not openly give utterance to his sentiments and feelings. He too had married unadvisedly one of the opposite party, and the ill-assorted union had embittered his life. In the character of Samson therefore he could give vent to his own feelings, and covertly reproach the people for their want of true virtue and energy; the dramatic form also enabled him to deplore the fate of the heroes of the Commonwealth.

But the Grecian drama also offered him parallels in the noble-minded Prometheus, the victim of despotism, from his fruitless attempts to serve mankind, and in the unhappy Oedipus, whom Fate had sunk in blindness and in misery. We may observe how he follows the course of these dramas. Thus, in that of Aeschylus, Prometheus, when left to himself, soliloquizes on his unhappy condition; the Chorus then comes in, and joins him. Oceanus next appears, to advise and offer his aid for his liberation; when he is gone, Io arrives, and her narrative ensues; and then Hermes comes, sent by the despot who had caused him to be chained on the rock, requiring obedience from him, and meets with a resolute refusal. In Milton's drama Samson is led in, and is then left by himself, to soliloquize on his woes; a Chorus comes to console him; his father Manoah next arrives, and after some time departs, to try to effect his liberation; his wife, Dalila, and the giant Harapha then

appear in succession ; the first to excuse her treachery, the latter to insult him. They are succeeded by the herald sent by the Philistine lords, requiring him to come and make them sport, and who departs on having received a decided refusal. Here the parallelism with the Prometheus ceases ; in what follows we may discern an agreement with the Oedipus at Colonus. Oedipus departs at a divine summons ; and Theseus, who had been present at it, relates the catastrophe. In like manner Samson, feeling internally a divine summons, departs, and one who had witnessed his end appears, and narrates it. The visit of Polyneices to his blind father is a parallel to that of Dalila to her husband, whose misery she had caused. The opening lines of the Samson also have a resemblance to those of the Oedipus.

We have always regarded this as a noble poem, the swan-song of a mighty genius. In the eye of criticism, free from pedantry, its defects must, we should think, be hardly appreciable. Throughout it has the force and dignity of Aeschylus, and at times it exhibits the majesty and sweetness of Sophocles. Had Milton flourished in ancient Attica, he had surely ranked with these mighty poets, milder and sweeter than the former, grander and more elevated than the latter. Yet Johnson says, after some pedantic criticism about the want of a Middle founded on the Aristotelian rules, “this is the tragedy which ignorance has admired and bigotry applauded !” As to the Middle, it certainly has it fully as much as the Prometheus, and as several others of the dramas of Greece ; and, in fact, the criticism amounts to this, that Milton should not have chosen that subject, for no human genius could have made more of it than he has done.

As Milton adhered closely to the ancient models in this

piece, the versification is of course of a subdued character, and devoid of the brilliant poetry of the *Paradise Lost*. But it is correct and chaste, dignified and solemn. The characters are well sustained,—that of the hero in particular; the occasional employment of familiar language, which offended Johnson, is common to him with the Grecian dramatists. The lyric portion, which is monostrophic, instead of being in strophe, antistrophe, and epode, and which only rimes capriciously, has given most offence to critics. Johnson, as might be expected, says that it is “often so harsh and dissonant as scarce to preserve, whether the lines end with or without rimes, any appearance of metrical regularity.” Cumberland says, that “in some places it is no measure at all, or such at least as the ear will not patiently endure, nor which any recitation can make harmonious;” and Hallam, that the metre itself “is infelicitous, the lines being frequently of a number of syllables not recognized in the usage of English poetry, and destitute of rhythmical measure, falls into prose.” Others have expressed themselves in a similar manner.

Now here are three critics, none perhaps remarkable for a poetic ear, accusing a poet, who had an ear for music and for verse of the utmost delicacy, of writing under the name of lyric poetry lines utterly devoid of melody. Surely then the suspicion must arise that this is but a part of the character of the ordinary English mind, which does not, for example, receive the same enjoyment from the high Italian schools of painting, as from the tamer and more familiar schools of Flanders and Holland. The presumption must be that the fault is in the reader, not in the poet. For our own part we freely own, that we are so convinced that a poet of Milton’s

order could not write inharmoniously, that wherever we seem to detect a want of melody, we feel quite convinced that the fault must be in ourselves ; and, on further consideration, we have always found it to be the case.

We will now examine the lines of the lyric parts which seem most likely to have offended the ear of those nice critics ; premising, in opposition to Hallam, that he uses no “ number of syllables not recognized in the usage of English poetry,” for his lines are all of from two to six feet,—all measures in use. We have shown above* that, in lines of three and four feet, the first foot may be monosyllabic ; and we shall show, when treating of the verse of *Paradise Lost*, that English poetry admitted anapaests among its iambs. We will further observe, that it seems to have been the poet’s intention, that the lyric parts should be read in a grave, solemn, measured tone :—

Irrecóverábly dárk, tótal eclípse. 81.

By prívilége of déath and búriál. 104.

Let us nót break ín upón him. 116.

As one past hope, abandonéd,
And by’ himsélf given óver. 120.

That heróic, thát renówned

Irresístible Sámson ? whóm unármed. 125.

Chalibéan témpered steél, and fróck of maíl
A’damantéan proóf. 133.

Príson within príson. 153.

Bút the héart of the foól. 298.

Oh! that tórménts shóuld not bé confíned. 606.†

That thóu toward him with hánd so váríoús,
Or míght I sáy contrárioús. 668.

Líke a státey shíp. 714.

* See above, page 260.

† The *Oh!* in this verse, and in v. 1267, is like the *φεῦ* of the Greek drama, which did not count in the iambic line.

O'h ! how cómely it ís and hów revíving
 To the spírits of júst men lóng oppréssed. 1268.
 Púts invíncible míght. 1271.
 He all their ammunitiön. 1277.
 With wingèd expeditiön. 1283.
 Lábouríng thy mind. 1298.
 O dearly bought revenge, yet gloriöus. 1660.
 To Is'ræl, ánd now líést victórioús. 1663.
 A'nd with blíndness intérnal strúck. 1686.*

We may here perhaps without impropriety offer a few remarks on the subject of reading poetry, as we are confident that most of the complaints of want of harmony which have been made against Milton, and other great poets, have their origin in want of skill in the reader.†

The power of reading well, like that of singing well, is the gift of nature, and cannot therefore be communicated by instruction. Like singing, however, it may be greatly improved by diligent culture, and it is therefore much to be regretted that it should be so generally neglected in our systems of education. There are not many persons who might not be taught to read prose tolerably well, and even the verse of Pope and his school, without chanting, or singsong as it is called.‡ With

* There may possibly have been a transposition, and the line have been—

And with internal blindness struck,
 but there would be a loss of energy.

† Moore (Diary, April 14, 1819) tells us that himself and Lord Lansdowne found Chaucer “unreadable.” The reason was, they did not know how to read him.

‡ We quote the following remarks of one who certainly *had* a musical ear, and both sang and read with feeling and expression:—

“Some discussion with respect to Byron’s method of repeating poetry, which I professed my strong dislike of. Observe in general that it is the men who have the worst ear for music that sing out poetry in this manner, having no nice perception of the difference there ought to be

Milton however, and poets of a higher order, whose verses are of varied melody, the case is different, and here we doubt if any but the born reader will ever attain to complete success. Still improvement may be made, and the reading become tolerable.

The following observations may not prove useless :—

It is impossible in any language whatsoever to pronounce two consecutive syllables without placing an accent, that is elevating the tone, on one of them, forming thus an iamb or a trochee. We shall therefore find that consecutive dactyls or anapaests, considered with regard to accent, really form a series of these feet, *ex. gr.*,

At the close of the day when the hamlet is still.

Words of more than two syllables have always more than one accent, of which the one is strong, the other (or others) weak, as in *régular, tránsitory*. These sometimes form the foot named choriamb, as in *tergiversátion*. A final syllable, as in this word, may either stand alone, or go to the formation of a new foot, with the initial syllable of the following word.

A good reader will never attempt to pronounce more than two of these feet, or two with a syllable, at a breath. Hence perhaps it was that the ancient Greeks termed their iambic and trochaic verses dimeters, trimeters, tetrameters, the line naturally dividing itself into two, three, or four portions.* Trimeters, for example, ran thus,—

between animated reading and *chant*. This is very much the Harrow style of reading. Hodgson has it; Lord Holland too (though not, I believe, a Harrow man), gives in to it considerably. Harness himself, I perceived, had it strongly, and by his own avowal he is without a musical ear, as is Lord Holland to a remarkable degree. Lord Byron, though he loved simple music, had no great organization that way.”—*T. Moore, Diary, May 4, 1828.*

* In dactylic and anapaestic verse the single foot was regarded as a metre.

*Ω τέκνα, | Κάδμου τοῦ πάλαι | νέα τροφή,
τίνας πόθ' ἔδρας | τύσδε μοι | θοάζετε;

In like manner our five-foot heroic and dramatic verse divides itself into three, or sometimes four, portions. *Paradise Lost* commences thus :—

Of man's | first disobedience || and the fruit
Of that | forbidden tree, || whose mortal taste
Brought death | into the world, || and all our woe,
With loss of Eden, || till | one greater man
Restore us, || and regain | the blissful seat.

The pause indicated by the double line is called the *cæsura*, and is frequently as long as that at the end of the verse ; that by the single line, which is usually much shorter, may be named the *semicæsura*. The length of the pause at any of these places can only be determined by the taste and judgement of the reader.

In arms | not worse, || in foresight | much advanced.
Where joy | for ever dwells. || Hail horrors ! || hail.
No wonder, || fallen | such a | pernicious height.
Awake, | arise, || or be | for ever fallen.

are examples of the occurrence of more than one *semicæsura* in a line.

The usual place of the *cæsura* in the four-foot verse is the middle of the line. There is sometimes a *semicæsura*, or even two ; but this last is rare.

The six-foot verse with which Spenser concludes his stanzas, and which Milton also employs, is, like the French Alexandrine, a compound of two three-foot lines, and should therefore, like that verse, have the *cæsura* exactly in the middle, as in—

To wanton | with the sun, || her lusty | paramour.
Should look so near || upon | her foul | deformities.

This last line, it will be seen, is not quite accurate. But neither Spenser nor Milton adhered strictly to this rule, as the following examples will show.

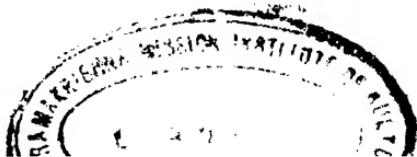
She strikes | a universal | peace || through sea and land,
While birds of calm | sit brooding || on | the charmed wave.

In all cases the voice should be somewhat elevated at the end of the third foot.

We will take this opportunity of reconsidering a line quoted some pages back from Macbeth. Our present opinion is that the whole passage should stand thus:—

If I say sooth, I must report they were
As cannons overcharged with double cracks
* * * * so they
Doubly redoubled strokes upon the foe.

The poet must have said what it is these cannons do; and there may be more than one line lost. As this scene was probably on the first page of the manuscript, it was peculiarly exposed to injury from friction, dirt, and such like; and it appears to us that elsewhere in it, lines or parts of lines have been effaced. In the same way *He* has been manifestly effaced in the first line of As you Like it.



II.

PROSE.

OF REFORMATION IN ENGLAND, AND THE CAUSES
THAT HITHERTO HAVE HINDERED IT.

THIS, the earliest of Milton's prose works, is addressed to a friend, and divided into two books. He commences by expressing his grief at the great and astonishing corruption of the pure doctrine taught by our Lord and his disciples, and then draws a picture of the sensuous material system which had usurped its place. He dwells on the pomp of vestments, “fetched from Aaron's old wardrobe or the Flamen's vestry,” on baptism's being made a kind of exorcism, and on “that feast of free grace and adoption, to which Christ invited his disciples to sit as brethren and coheirs of the happy covenant,” becoming “the subject of horror and gloating adoration, pageanted about like a dreadful idol.” He then passes to the consideration of what he terms “the bright and blissful Reformation ;” at the thoughts of which, he exclaims,—

Methinks a sovereign and reviving joy must needs rush into the mind of him that reads or hears, and the sweet odour of the returning Gospel imbathe his soul with the fragrancy of heaven. Then was the sacred Bible sought out of the dusty corners where prophanie falsehood and neglect had thrown it, the schools opened, divine and human learning raked out of the embers of forgotten

tongues, the princes and cities trooping to the new-erected banner of salvation, the martyrs with the irresistible might of weakness shaking the powers of darkness and scorning the fiery rage of the old red dragon.

He next proceeds to consider how it was that England, which, he says, had in Wickliffe been the first to “set up a standard for the recovery of lost truth, and blow the first evangelic trumpet to the nations,” should have fallen from her eminence; and, while in purity of doctrine we agree with our brethren, yet in discipline “we are no better than a schism from the Reformation.” This he ascribes to the holding of the principle, that ordination belongs only to bishops, and to the retention of “senseless ceremonies.”

In order to prove this, he gives a brief sketch of the progress of the Reformation in England, commencing with Henry VIII., whose only quarrel with the Papacy, he says, was about supremacy; while the bishops, “though they had renounced the Pope, still hugged the popedom, and shared the authority among themselves.” In the time of Edward VI. the Reformation was impeded by rebellions, and by quarrels among the peers; while the bishops “suffered themselves to be the common stakes to countenance with their prostituted gravities every politic fetch that was then on foot.” He gives as instances, Cranmer and Ridley being employed to extort from the young King a toleration for the use of the Mass by his sister Mary; Latimer’s assertion of the truth of the charges against Lord Seymour of Sudley, and Cranmer and the other bishops joining in the attempt to deprive the two princesses of their right to the crown.* To

* On these matters see our History of England, where we shall be found to differ somewhat from Milton’s views.

the excuse that these men were martyrs, he replies, that this is no proof of their being incapable of error; and he instances the Arians and Pelagians, “which were slain by the heathen for Christ’s sake, yet we take both of these for no true friends of Christ.”

And here withall I invoke the Immortal Deity, revealer and judge of seerets, that wherever I have in this book plainly and roundly, though worthily and truly, laid open the faults and blemishes of Fathers, martyrs, or Christian emperors, or have otherwise inveighed against error and superstition with vehement expressions, I have done it neither out of malice nor list [inclination] to speak evil, nor any vain glory; but of mere necessity, to vindicate the spotless truth from an ignominious bondage, whose native worth is now become of such a low esteem that she is like to find small credit with us for what she can say, unless she can bring a ticket from Cranmer, Latimer, and Ridley, or prove herself a retainer to Constantine and wear his badge. More tolerable it were for the Church of God that all these names were utterly abolished, like the Brazen Serpent, than that men’s fond opinion should thus idolize them, and the heavenly truth be thus captivated.

The time of Edward VI., from its unsettled nature, was no time for forming a perfect constitution, and those to whom it was committed had different ends in view. We are not therefore to argue in favour of episcopacy from its being then continued. Episcopacy is to be judged from its effects, and it actually, he thinks, “worsens and slugs the most learned and seeming religious of our ministers.”

But what [for what] do we suffer misshapen and enormous prelatism,* as we do, thus to blanch and varnish her deformities with the fair colours, as before of martyrdom, so now of episcopacy? They are not bishops, God and all good men know they are not, that have filled this land with late confusion and violence,

* We are to observe that Milton throughout distinguishes prelates from bishops.

but a tyrannical crew and corporation of impostors, that have blinded the world so long under that name. He that, enabled with gifts from God, and the lawful and primitive choice of the Church, assembled in convenient number, faithfully from that time forward feeds his parochial flock, has his coequal and compresbyterial power to ordain ministers and deacons, by public prayer and vote of Christ's congregation, in like sort as he himself was ordained, and is a true apostolic bishop. But when he steps up into the chair of pontifical pride, and changes a moderate and exemplary house, for a misgoverned and haughty palace, spiritual dignity for carnal precedency, and secular high office and employment for the high negociations of his heavenly embassage, then he degrades, then he unbishops himself. He that makes him a bishop, makes him no bishop.

He gives as an instance St. Martin, who complained to Sulpitius Severus, that since he had been a bishop, he felt a sensible decay of the gifts and graces that God had previously given him, though Sulpitius says there was no change in his manners or habits.

The same impediments, he proceeds to say, prevailed in Elizabeth's reign, and the crude constitutions made in the time of Edward were established for good and all, though they had not satisfied even those who made them; and their impugners were branded with the name of Puritans and persecuted, while the Queen was made to believe that she would endanger her prerogative if she consented to do away with bishops. He then comes to his own times, and he divides the hinderers of Reformation into three classes, Antiquitarians ("for so I had rather call them than Antiquaries, whose labours are useful and laudable"), Libertines, and Politicians.

In answer to the first, he undertakes to show that, if "they will conform our bishops to the purer times, they must mew their feathers and their pounces,"* and make

* *Mew* is the same as *moult*; *pounce* is scent or perfume.

but curtailed bishops of them ;” secondly, that “ those purer times were corrupt, and their books corrupted soon after ;” thirdly, that the best writers of those times disclaim all authority and send men to the Scriptures.

He first shows, by the testimony of Ignatius, that bishops must be elected by the hands of the whole Church ; and, from him and Cauden, that previous to the year 268 bishops had no fixed dioceses, but exercised their authority wherever they came. He further proves from Cyprian, that bishops could not lawfully be appointed without the consent of the people, and shows from an epistle of the Council of Nicæa, and the example of St. Martin, that such was the practice down to the end of the fourth century, and apparently to the end of the ninth. From Ignatius and Cyprian he shows, that bishops were only the first among their compresbyters, and could do nothing without their counsel and consent ; a glimpse of which, he says, remains at Rome, where the Pope “ performeth all ecclesiastical jurisdiction, as in consistory among his cardinals, which were originally but the parish-priests of Rome.”

Thus then did the spirit of unity and meekness inspire and animate every joint and sinew of the mystical body. But now the gravest and worthiest minister, a true bishop of his fold, shall be reviled and ruffled by an insulting and only canon-wise prelate, as if he were some slight paltry companion [fellow] ; and the people of God, redeemed and washed with Christ’s blood, and dignified with so many glorious titles of Saints and Sons in the Gospel, are now no better respected than impure Ethnies and lay dogs. Stones and pillars and crucifixes have now the honour and the alms due to Christ’s living members ; the table of communion, now become a table of separation, stands like an exalted platform upon the brow of the quire, fortified with bulwark and barrieade to keep off the profane touch of the laics ; while the obscene and surfeited priest scruples not to paw and mammoe the sacramental bread as

familiarly as his tavern-biscuit. And thus the people, vilified and rejected by them, give over the earnest study of virtue and godliness, as a thing of greater purity than they need, and the search of divine knowledge as a mystery too high for their capacities, and only for churchmen to meddle with,—which is what the prelates desire, that, when they have brought us back to Popish blindness, we might commit to their dispose the whole management of our salvation; for they think it was never fair world with them since that time. But he that will mould a modern bishop into a primitive, must yield him to be elected by the popular voice, undioecised, unreverenced, unlorded, and leave him nothing but brotherly equality, matchless temperance, frequent fasting, incessant prayer and preaching, continual watchings and labours in his ministry,—which, what a rich booty it would be, what a plump endowment to the many-benefice-gaping mouth of a prelate, what a relish it would give to his canary-sucking and swan-eating palate, let old bishop Mountain judge for me.*

His second assertion, that those purer times themselves were corrupt, is proved by the testimony of Ignatius and Eusebius. The writings of those times also are full of errors, for “who,” says he, “is ignorant of the foul errors, the ridiculous wrestlings of Scripture, the heresies, the vanities thick-sown through the volumes of Justin Martyr, Clemens, Origen, Tertullian, and others of the eldest time?” Further, “who knows not how many superstitious works are ingrafted into the legitimate writings of the Fathers? and of those books that pass for authentic, who knows what hath been tampered withal, what hath been rased out, what hath been inserted?” He then comes to Constantine, the great object of the praise of the clergy, and exposes his cruelty, his Arianism, and his persecution of the “faithful and invincible” Athanasius, and the superstition of himself and his mother respect-

* What precedes is directed against the Laudian innovations. Bishop Mountain, who it seems was a *gourmand*, was an active promoter of them.

ing the true cross, and asks, “How should then the dim taper of this Emperor’s age, that had such need of snuffing, extend any beam to our times, wherewith we might hope to be better lighted than by those luminaries which God hath set up to shine to us far nearer hand?” He enumerates the corruptions introduced into the Church by and through this Prince, whose successors proved to be the one “a flat Arian,” the other an apostate, and there his race ended. The Church then, according to the testimony of St. Martin and Sulpitius, went on growing continually worse and worse. He quotes passages from Dante, Petrarea, and Ariosto, in proof of its being “a received opinion, even among men professing the Romish faith, that Constantine marred all in the Church.” When therefore “the prelates cry out, Let the Church be reformed according to Constantine, it should sound to a judicious ear no otherwise than if they should say, Make us rich, make us lofty, make us lawless [free from law]. For if any under him were not so, thanks to those ancient remains of integrity which were not yet quite worn out, and not to his government.”

That the most ancient and best of the Fathers disclaimed all authority, is proved by the testimony of Cyprian, Lactantius, and Austin; and that they referred the decision of all controversy to the Scriptures is shown briefly from Ignatius and copiously from Cyprian; he also quotes a passage to the same effect from Basil. To the objections that “the Scriptures are difficult to be understood, and therefore require the explanation of the Fathers,” he replies, “It is true there be some books, and especially some places in these books, that remain clouded, yet ever that which is most necessary to be known is most easy, and that which is most difficult so

far expounds itself ever, as to tell us how little it imports our saving knowledge,” etc.

I will not run into a paroxysm of citations again in this point, only instance Athanasius in his forementioned first page. “The knowledge of truth,” saith he, “wants no human lore, as being evident in itself and by the preaching of Christ now opens brighter than the sun.” If these doctors, who had scarce half the light that we enjoy, who all, except two or three, were ignorant of the Hebrew tongue, and many of the Greek, blundering upon the dangerous and suspectful translations of the apostate Aquila, the heretical Theodotion, the judaized Symmachus, the erroneous Origin—if these could yet find the Bible so easy, why should we doubt, that have all the helps of learning and faithful industry that man in this life can look for, and the assistance of God as near now to us as ever? But let the Scriptures be hard—are they more hard, more crabbed, more abstruse than the Fathers? He that cannot understand the sober, plain, and unaffected style of the Scriptures, will be ten times more puzzled with the knotty Africanisms,* the pampered metaphors, the intricate and involved sentences of the Fathers, beside the fantastic and declamatory flashes, the cross-jingling periods, which cannot but disturb and come thwart a settled devotion, worse than the din of bells and rattles.

Now, sir, for the love of holy reformation, what can be said more against these importunate clients of Antiquity than she herself their patroness hath said? Whether, think ye, would she approve still to dote upon immeasurable, innumerable, and therefore unnecessary and unmerciful volumes, choosing rather to err with the specious name of the Fathers, or to take a sound truth at the hand of a plain upright man, that all his days hath been diligently reading the Holy Scriptures and thereto imploring God's grace, while the admirers of antiquity have been beating their brains about their Ambones, their Diptychs, and Meniaias? Now he that cannot tell of Stations and Indictions, nor has wasted his precious hours in the endless conferring of Councils and Conclaves that demolish one another—although I know many of those

* Alluding to Tertullian, Cyprian, and Austin, who were all natives of Africa.

that pretend to be great rabbies in these studies, have scarce saluted them from the strings* and the title-page, or, to give them more, have been but the ferrets and mouschunts† of an index—yet what pastor or minister, how learned, religious, or discreet soever, does not now bring both his cheeks full-blown with Occumenical and Synodical shall be counted a lank, shallow and insufficient man, yea a dunce, and not worthy to speak about church-discipline. But I trust they for whom God hath reserved the honour of reforming this church will easily perceive their adversaries' drift in thus calling for Antiquity. They fear the plain field of the Scriptures; the chase is too hot; they seek the dark, the bushy, the tangled forest; they would imbosk:‡ they feel themselves struck in the transparent streams of divine truth; they would plunge and tumble and think to lie hid in the foul weeds and muddy waters, where no plummet can reach the bottom. But let them beat themselves like whales, and spend their oil till they be dragged ashore. Though wherefore should the ministers give them so much line for shifts and delays? Wherefore should they not urge only the Gospel§ and hold it ever in their faces, like a mirror of diamond, till it dazzle and pierce their misty eyeballs, maintaining it the honour of its absolute sufficiency and supremacy inviolable? For if the Scripture be for reformation and Antiquity to boot, it is but an advantage to the dozen; it is no winning cast: and though Antiquity be against it, while the Scriptures be for it, the cause is as good as ought to be wished, Antiquity itself sitting judge.

As to the Libertines, no form of discipline would satisfy them. It is only necessary to discover these men; “for reason they have none, but lust and licentiousness, and therefore answer can have none.” The first book concludes here, and the second is devoted to replying to the Politicians.

* There were frequently at that time strings attached to the edges of the covers of books, to close them.

† The moushunt is an animal of the weasel genus.

‡ *i. e.* shelter in the wood, *imboscare* It. He then changes the metaphor to fishing. This change of metaphor is frequent in Horace.

§ *i. e.* the Gospel alone.

Having briefly noticed what the objects of the true statesman should be, he adds by way of contrast, “This is the masterpiece of a modern politician, how to qualify and mould the sufferance and subjection of the people to the length of that foot that is to tread on their necks; how rapine may serve itself with the fair and honourable pretence of public good; how the puny* law may be brought under the wardship and control of lust and will: in which attempt if they fall short, then must a superficial colour of reputation by all means, direct or indirect, be gotten to wash over the unsightly bruise of honour.”

Men of this sort allege,—“ 1. That the church-government must be conformable to the civil polity; next, that no form of church-government is agreeable to monarchy but that of bishops.” The first of these positions he refutes, by showing that the church-government of the Jews never varied during all the numerous changes of that of the state. How much more then must that be the case now, when the Gospel “forbids churchmen to intermeddle with worldly employments.”

Seeing that the churchman’s office is only to teach men the Christian faith, to exhort all, to encourage the good, to admonish the bad (privately the less offender, publicly the scandalous and stubborn), to censure and separate from the communion of Christ’s flock the contagious and incorrigible, to receive with joy and fatherly compassion the penitent. All this must be done; and more than this is beyond any church-authority.

In refutation of the second position, he undertakes to prove that “episcopacy, with that authority which it challenges in England, is not only not agreeable, but tending to the destruction of monarchy.” He then goes

* *Puisné*, i. e. under age.

through the history of the Church, showing its gradual encroachments on the temporal power, and coming to his own times, asserts that the bishops weakened the crown of England by alienating the affections of the people, by forcing numbers to seek a refuge from their tyranny in the wilds of America, by disgusting its natural allies the Protestants of the Continent, as the prelates “account them no better than a sort* of sacrilegious and puritanical rebels, preferring the Spaniard, our deadly enemy, before them, and set all orthodox writers at nought in comparison of the Jesuits, who are indeed the only corruptors of youth and good learning. And I have heard many wise and learned men in Italy say as much.” But this is only a small part of what the prelates have done. “By their seditious practices they have endangered to lose the king one third of his main stock. What have they not done to banish him from his own native country” [Scotland]? Then they seek to render the people effeminate, by instigating them by public edict and pushing them forward “to gaming, jigging, wassailing, and mixed dancing”† on the day set apart for meditation and prayer. In this he compares them with Balaam. They also diminish the wealth of the kingdom by their ceremonies and their courts; for the former consume it in the erection of “temples beautified exquisitely to outvie the Papists,” and providing of “images, pictures, rich copes, gorgeous altar-cloths;” while the latter absorb still greater sums of money in “sordid fees,” in direct opposition to the spirit of the Gospel. Further, they seek to degrade the people by preaching the divine right of kings

* *i. e.* a set, a crew.

† Alluding to the Book of Sports. *Mixed dancing* is the dancing of the two sexes together.

and the duty of non-resistance, while at the same time all their efforts are directed to setting the episcopate above the monarchy; for “Is not the chief of them [Laud] accused out of his own book and his late canons, to affect a certain unquestionable Patriarchate independent and unsubordinate to the Crown?” Alluding then to their having caused the war with Scotland, he bursts into the following eloquent strain.

But ever blessed be He and ever glorified that from his high watch-tower in the heavens, discerning the crooked ways of perverse and cruel men, hath hitherto maimed and infatuated all their damnable inventions, and deluded their great wizards with a delusion fit for fools and children! Had God been so minded, he could have sent a spirit of mutiny amongst us, as he did between Abimelech and the Sechemites, to have made our funerals and slain heaps more in number than the miserable surviving remnant. But he, when we least deserved, sent out a gentle gale and message of peace from the wings of those his Cherubims that fan his mercy-seat. Nor shall the wisdom, the moderation, the Christian piety, the constancy of our nobility and commons of England be ever forgotten, whose calm and temperate connivance could sit still and smile out the stormy bluster of men more audacious and precipitant than of solid and deep reach, until their own fury had run itself out of breath, assailing by rash and heady approaches the impregnable situation [site] of our liberty and safety, that laughed such weak enginery to scorn, such poor drifts to make a national war of a surplice-brabble, a tippet-scuffle,* and engage the untainted honour of English knighthood to unfurl the streaming red-cross, or to rear the horrid standard of those fatal guly dragons for so unworthy a purpose as to force upon their fellow-subjects that which themselves are weary of, the skeleton of a mass-book. Nor must the patience, the fortitude, the firm obedience of the nobles and people of Scotland, striving against manifold provocations, nor must their sincere and moderate proceedings hitherto be unremembered, to the shameful conviction of their detractors.

Go on both, hand in hand, O nations, never to be disunited; be

* The attempt to force a Liturgy on Scotland.

the praise and the heroic song of all posterity. Merit this, but seek only virtue, not to extend your limits—for what needs to win a fading triumphant laurel out of the tears of wretched men?—but to settle the pure worship of God in his church, and justice in the state. Then shall the hardest difficulties smooth out themselves before ye; envy shall sink to Hell,* craft and malice be confounded, whether it be homebred mischief or outlandish cunning: yea, other nations will then covet to serve ye; for lordship and victory are but the pages of justice and virtue. Commit securely to true wisdom the vanquishing and uneasing of craft and subtlety, which are but her two runagates.† Join your invincible might to do worthy and godlike deeds; and then he that seeks to break your union—a cleaving curse be his inheritance to all generations.

He then urges speed in carrying out the necessary reformation, and having answered the objections against haste, and going into extremes, etc., he concludes the treatise with the following address to the Deity:—

Thou therefore that sittest in light and glory unapproachable, Parent of angels and men! next, thee I implore, omnipotent King, Redeemer of that lost remnant whose nature thou didst assume, ineffable and everlasting Love! and thou the third subsistence of divine infinitude, illumining Spirit, the joy and solace of created things! one tripersonal Godhead! look upon this thy poor and almost spent and expiring Church; leave her not thus a prey to these importunate wolves, that wait and think long till they devour thy tender flock, these wild boars that have broke into thy vineyard and left the prints of their polluting hoofs on the souls of thy servants. Oh! let them not bring about their damned designs‡ that stand now at the entrance of the bottomless pit, expecting the watchword to open and let out those dreadful locusts and scorpions, to reinvoke us in that pitchy cloud of infernal darkness, where we shall never more see the sun of thy

* “Invidia infelix Furias amnemque severum
Cocytii metuet,” etc.—*Virg. Geor.* iii. 37.

† *i.e.* runaway servants. *Uncasing* refers to the stripping servants of their liveries.

‡ *i.e.* bring back Popery and ecclesiastic domination.

truth again, never hope for the cheerful dawn, never more hear the bird of morning sing. Be moved with pity at the afflicted state of this our shaken monarchy, that now lies labouring under her throes, and struggling against the grudges of more dreadful calamities.

O thou that, after the impetuous rage of five bloody inundations, and the succeeding sword of intestine war, soaking the land in her own gore, didst pity the sad and ceaseless revolution of our swift and thick-coming sorrows; when we were quite breathless, of thy free grace didst motion peace and terms of covenant with us; and having first well-nigh freed us from Antichristian thralldom,* didst build up this Britannic empire to a glorious and enviable height, with all her daughter-islands about her—stay [maintain] us in this felicity; let not the obstinacy of our half-obedience and will-worship bring forth that viper of sedition that for these fourscore years hath been breeding to eat through the entrails of our peace, but let her cast her abortive spawn without the danger of this travailing realm; that we may still remember in our solemn thanksgivings how for us the Northern Ocean, even to the frozen Thule, was scattered with the proud shipwrecks of the Spanish Armada, and the very maw of Hell ransacked and made to give up her concealed destruction ere she could vent it in that horrible and damned blast.†

Oh! how much more glorious will those former deliverances appear, when we shall know them not only to have saved us from greatest miseries past, but to have reserved us for greater happiness to come! Hitherto thou hast but freed us, and that not fully, from the unjust and tyrannous claim of thy foes—now unite us entirely and appropriate us to thyself, tie us everlastingily in willing homage to the prerogative of thy eternal throne.

And now we know, O thou our most certain hope and defence, that thine enemies have been consulting all the sorcerers of the Great Whore, and have joined their plots with that sad intelligencing tyrant‡ that mischiefs the world with his mines of Ophir, and lies thirsting to revenge his naval ruins that have larded our

* He would seem to allude to the invasions of England by the Romans, Saxons, Danes (twice), and Normans, and the War of the Roses, followed by the partial reformation under Henry VIII.

† *i.e.* the Gunpowder Plot.

‡ The King of Spain. *Sad* is grave, serious.

seas. But let them all take counsel together, and let it come to nought; let them decree and thou cancel it; let them gather themselves and be scattered; let them embattle themselves and be broken; let them embattle and be broken, for thou art with us.

Then, amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains, in new and lofty measure to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgements in this land throughout all ages,* whereby this great and warlike nation, instructed and inured to the fervent and continual practice of truth and righteousness, and casting far from her the rags of her whole vices, may press on hard to that high and happy emulation to be found the soberest, wisest, and most Christian people at that day, when thou, the eternal and shortly-expected King, shalt open the clouds to judge the several kingdoms of the world, and distributing national honours and rewards to religious and just commonwealths, shalt put an end to all earthly tyrannies, proclaiming thy universal and mild monarchy through heaven and earth; where they undoubtedly that, by their labours, counsels and prayers, have been earnest for the common good of religion and their country, shall receive, above the inferior orders of the blessed, the regal additions of principalities, legions, and thrones into their glorious titles, and in supereminen^ce of beatific vision, progressing the dateless and irrevoluble circle of eternity, shall clasp inseparable hands with joy and bliss in overmeasure for ever.†

But they contrary, that, by the impairing and diminution of the true faith, the distresses and servitude of their country, aspire to high dignity, rule, and promotion here, after a shameful end in this life—which God grant them!—shall be thrown down eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, where, under the despiteful control, the trample and spurn of all the other damned,—that, in the anguish of their torture, shall have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over them as their slaves and negroes,—they shall remain in that plight for ever, the basest, the lowermost, the most dejected, most underfoot, and downtrodden vassals of perdition.

* Alluding to his meditated poem on a British theme.

† Here we have Milton's ideas, at that time, of the Millennium or reign of Christ.

OF PRELATICAL EPISCOPACY.

Episcopacy, he observes, is either of divine or of human constitution. If of the latter, it may be changed like everything else; if asserted to be of the former, the proofs must be fetched from Scripture alone, as it alone is of divine authority. But in the New Testament no difference whatever is made between Bishop and Presbyter.

Yet, to verify that which St. Paul foretold of succeeding times, when men began to have itching ears, then, not contented with the plentiful and wholesome fountains of the Gospel, they began after their own lusts to heap to themselves teachers and—as if the Divine Scripture wanted a supplement, and were to be eked out—they cannot think any doubt resolved, and any doctrine confirmed, unless they run to that indigested heap and fry of authors which they call Antiquity. *Whosoever Time or the heedless hand of blind Chance hath drawn down in her huge drag-net, whether fish or sea-weeds, shells or shrubs, unpicked, unchosen, these are the Fathers.*

Milton then examines the testimony of the Fathers, as produced by Usher and Hall. He first shows that that of Leontius, bishop of Magnesia, is of no value whatever; on which occasion he speaks very slightly of the ancient Councils, hinting, that the members of them may have been no better than those of modern Convocations; but that at all events their canons, acts, etc. have often been falsified. He quotes Eusebius to show, that in his time it was quite a matter of uncertainty who were left bishops of the churches by the Apostles; and from Justin Martyr he shows that the term *Προεστῶς* might be used of any presbyter. Of the Epistles that go under the name of Ignatius, five, he says, are certainly spurious, and the remainder are so largely interpolated that it is impossible to say what is genuine. As to Irenæus,

who is brought to prove that Polycarp was bishop of Smyrna, because he had both seen and heard him, it is replied that he was only a boy at the time, and therefore hardly competent to judge. He was besides, as is shown by several instances—such as his putting implicit faith in the assertions of Papias—a man of such a shallow wit, that his judgement and critical skill are of little account. There is no proof that Tertullian made any distinction between Bishop and Presbyter.

But suppose he had made an imparity where none was originally, should he move us that goes about to prove an imparity between God the Father and God the Son? as these words import in his book against Præcas: “The Father is the whole substance, but the Son a derivation and portion of the whole, as he himself professes, ‘Because the Father is greater than me.’” Believe him now for a faithful relater of tradition, whom you see such an unfaithful expounder of the Scripture.

He that thinks it the part of a well-learned man to have read diligently the ancient stories of the Church, and to be no stranger to the volumes of the Fathers, shall have all judicious men consenting with him. Not hereby to control and newfangle the Scripture, God forbid! but to mark how corruption and apostasy crept in by degrees, and to gather up wherever we find the remaining sparks of original truth wherewith to stop the mouths of our adversaries, and to bridle them with their own curb, who willingly pass by that which is orthodoxal in them, and studiously cull out that which is commentitious and best for their turns, not weighing the Fathers in the balance of Scripture, but Scripture in the balance of the Fathers. If we therefore, making first the Gospel our rule and oracle, shall take the good which we light on in the Fathers, and set it to oppose the evil which other men seek from them, in this way of skirmish we shall easily master all superstition and false doctrine. But if we turn this our discreet and wary usage of them into a blind devotion toward them and whatsoever we find written in them, we both forsake our own grounds and reasons which led us at first to part from Rome,—that is to hold to the Scriptures against all Antiquity; we remove our cause into our adversaries’ own court, and take up there those cast prin-

ciples, which will soon cause us to solder up with them again; inasmuch as, believing Antiquity for itself in any one point, we bring an engagement upon ourselves of assenting to all that it charges upon us.

THE REASON OF CHURCH GOVERNMENT URGED AGAINST PRELATY.

In the first book of this treatise Milton undertakes to prove that church-government is not a matter of indifference, but is set down in Scripture. He then argues at length against the position of Bishop Andrews and Archbishop Usher, that it is to be patterned by the Levitical Law, and finally shows that “Prelaty was not set up for prevention of schism, as is pretended; or that, if it were, it performis not what it was first set up for, but quite the contrary.”

In the Introduction to the second book he gives the following most interesting justification of his own conduct in this controversy.

For me, I have determined to lay up as the best treasure and solace of a good old-age—if God vouchsafe it me—the honest liberty of free speech from my youth, where I shall think it available in so dear a concernment as the Church’s good. For if I be, either by disposition or whatever cause, too inquisitive or suspicious of myself and mine own doings, who can help it? But this I foresee, that should the Church be brought under heavy oppression, and God have given me ability the while to reason against that man that should be the author of so foul a deed; or should she, by blessing from above on the industry and courage of faithful men, change this her distracted estate into better days, without the least furtherance or contribution of those few talents which God at that present had lent me, I foresee what stories I should hear within myself, all my life after, of discourage and reproach: “Timorous and ungrateful, the Church of God is now again at the foot of her insulting enemies, and thou bewailest. What matters it for thee or they bewailing? When time was,

thou couldst not find a syllable of all that thou hast read or studied to utter in her behalf. Yet ease and leisure was given thee for thy retired thoughts, out of the sweat of other men.* Thou hast the diligence, the parts, the language of a man, if a vain subject were to be adorned or beautified;† but when the cause of God and his Church was to be pleaded,—for which purpose that tongue was given thee which thou hast,—God listened if he could hear thy voice among his zealous servants, but thou wast dumb as a beast. From henceforth be that which thine own brutish silence hath made thee.” Or else I should have heard on the other ear: “Slothful and ever to be set light by, the Church hath now overcome her late distresses, after the unwearied labours of many her true servants that stood up in her defence. Thou also wouldest take upon thee to share amongst them of their joy. But wherefore thou? Where canst thou show any word or deed of thine which might have hastened her peace? Whatever thou dost now talk or write or look is the alms of other men’s active prudence and zeal. Dare not now to say or do anything better than thy former sloth and infancy;‡ or, if thou darest, thou dost impudently to make a thrifty purchase of boldness to thyself, out of the painful merits of other men. What before was thy sin is now thy duty, to be abject and worthless.”

These and such-like lessons as these I know would have been my matins duly and my even-song. But now by this little diligence mark what a privilege I have gained with good men and saints to claim my right of lamenting the tribulations of the Church, if she should suffer, while others, that have ventured nothing for her sake, have not the honour to be admitted mourners. But if she lift up her drooping head and prosper, among those that have something more than wished her welfare, I have my charter and freehold of rejoicing to me and my heirs. Concerning therefore this wayward subject against prelacy—the touching whereof is so distasteful and disquietous to a number of men—as by what hath been said I may deserve of charitable readers to be credited, that neither envy nor gall hath entered me upon this controversy, but the enforcement of conscience only, and a pre-

* The fortune made by his father. This shows that Milton was in independent circumstances.

† Alluding probably to Comus, etc.

‡ In its original Latin sense, muteness, not speaking.

ventive* fear lest the omitting of this duty should be against me, when I would store up to myself the good provision of peaceful hours—so lest it should be still imputed to me, as I have found it hath been, that some pleasing humour of vain glory hath excited me to contest with men of high estimation, now while green years are upon my head, from this needless surmisal I shall hope to dissuade the intelligent and equal† auditor if I can but say successfully that which in this exigent behoves me: although I would be heard only, if it might be, by the elegant and learned reader, to whom principally, for a while, I shall beg leave I may address myself.

To him it will be no new thing though I tell him that, if I hunted after praise by the ostentation of wit and learning, I should not write thus out of mine own season, when I have neither yet completed to my mind the full circle of my private studies—although I complain not of any insufficieney to the matter in hand—or, were I ready to my wishes, it were a folly to commit anything elaborately composed to the careless and interrupted listening of these tumultuous times.‡ Next, if I were wise only to my own ends, I would certainly take such a subject as of itself might catch applause—whereas this hath all the disadvantages on the contrary—and such a subject as the publishing whereof might be delayed at pleasure, and time enough to pencil it over with all the curious touches of art, even to the perfection of a faultless picture; whereas in this argument the not deferring is of great moment to the good speeding, that if solidity have leisure to do her office art cannot have much. Lastly, I should not chuse this manner of writing, wherein knowing myself inferior to myself, led by the genial power of nature to another task, I have the use, as I may account, but of my left hand. And though I shall be foolish in saying more to this purpose, yet, since it will be such folly as wisest men go about to commit, having only confessed and so committed, I may trust with more reason, because with more folly, to have courteous pardon. For, although a poet,§ soaring in the high reason of his fancies with his garland and sing-

* In its Latin sense, anticipatory, like “*preventient grace*.”

† *Aequalis*, equitable, just.

‡ This seems to be an allusion to his meditated great work.

§ He had perhaps in his mind the description of Arion in the *Fasti* of his favourite Ovid.

ing-robes about him, might without apology speak more of himself than I mean to do, yet for me sitting here below in the cool element of prose, a mortal thing among many readers of no empyreal conceit, to venture and divulge unusual things of myself, I shall petition to the gentler sort it may not be envy* to me.

I must say, therefore, that, after I had from my first years, by the ceaseless care and diligence of my father—whom God recompense!—been exercised to the tongues and some sciences, as my age would suffer, by sundry masters and teachers both at home and at the schools, it was found that, whether aught was imposed me by them that had the overlooking, or betaken to of mine own choice, in English or other tongue, prosing or versing, but chiefly by this latter, the style by certain vital signs it had was likely to live. But much latelier, in the private Academies of Italy, whither I was favoured to resort, perceiving that some trifles which I had in memory, composed at under twenty or thereabouts—for the manner is that every one must give some proof of his wit and reading there—met with acceptance above what was looked for, and other things, which I had shifted in scarcity of books and conveniences to patch up amongst them, were received with written encomiums, which the Italian is not forward to bestow on men of this side the Alps—I began thus far to assent to them, and divers of my friends here at home, and not less to an inward prompting which now grew daily upon me, that, by labour and intense study—which I take to be my portion in this life—joined with the strong propensity of nature, I might perhaps leave something so written to aftertimes as they should not willingly let it die. These thoughts at once possessed me and these other; that if I were certain to write, as men buy leases, for three lives and downward, there ought no regard be sooner had than to God's glory, by the honour and instruction of my country. For which cause, and not only for that I knew it would be hard to arrive at the second rank among the Latins, I applied myself to that resolution which Ariosto followed against the persuasions of Bembo, to fix all the industry and art I could unite to the adorning of my native tongue; not to make verbal curiosities the end—that were a toilsome vanity—but to be an interpreter and relater of the best and sagest things, among mine own citizens throughout this island, in the mother-dialect: that what the greatest and choicest wits†

* *Invidia*, in its sense of odium. † *Ingenia*: see above, p. 28.

of Athens, Rome, or modern Italy, and those Hebrews of old did for their country, I, in my proportion, with this over of being a Christian, might do for mine; not caring to be once named abroad —though perhaps I could attain to that—but content with these British islands as my world; whose fortune hath hitherto been that, if the Athenians, as some say, made their small deeds great and renowned by their eloquent writers, England hath had her noble achievements made small by the unskilful handling of monks and mechanics.

Time serves not now, and perhaps I might seem too profuse, to give any certain account of what the mind at home, in the spacious circuits of her musing, hath liberty to propose to herself, though of highest hope and hardest attempting: whether that epic form whereof the two poems of Homer, and those other two of Virgil and Tasso are a diffuse, and the Book of Job a brief model; or whether the rules of Aristotle herein are strictly to be kept, or nature to be followed,* which, in them that know art and use judgement, is no transgression, but an enriching of art; and lastly, what king or knight, before the Conquest, might be chosen in whom to lay the pattern of a Christian hero; and, as Tasso gave to a Prince of Italy his choice, whether he would command him to write of Godfrey's expedition against the Infidels, or Belisarius' against the Goths, or Charlemain against the Lombards, if to the instinct of nature and the emboldening of art aught may be trusted, and that there be nothing adverse in our climate or the fate of this age, it haply would be no rashness, from an equal diligence and inclination to present the like offer in our own ancient stories: or whether those dramatic constitutions, wherein Sophocles and Euripides reign, shall be found more doctrinal and exemplary† to a nation; the Scripture also affords us a divine pastoral drama in the Song of Solomon, consisting of two persons and a double chorus, as Origen rightly judges, and the Apocalypse of St. John is the majestic image of a high and stately tragedy, shutting up and intermingling her solemn scenes and acts with a sevenfold chorus of hallelujahs and harping symphonies,—and this my opinion the grave authority of Parcus, commenting that book, is sufficient to confirm: or, if occasion shall lead, to imitate those

* As by Ariosto and Spenser, perhaps he means.

† *i. e.* instructive, serving for example, as the *Novelas Exemplares* of Cervantes.

magnific odes and hymns, wherein Pindarus and Callimachus are in most things worthy, some others in their frame judicious, in their matter most an end* faulty; but those frequent songs throughout the Law and Prophets beyond all these, not in their Divine argument alone, but in the very critical art of composition, may be easily made appear over all the kinds of lyric poesy to be incomparable.

These abilities, wheresoever they be found, are the inspired gift of God, rarely bestowed, but yet to some—though most abuse—in every nation; and are of power, beside the office of a pulpit, to imbreed and cherish in a great people the seeds of virtue and public civility [civilization]; to allay the perturbations of the mind and set the affections in right tune; to celebrate in glorious and lofty hymns the throne and equipage of God's almighty, and what he works and what he suffers to be wrought with high Providence in his Church; to sing victorious agonies of martyrs and saints, the deeds and triumphs of just and pious nations, doing valiantly through faith against the enemies of Christ; to deplore the general relapses of kingdoms and states from justice and God's true worship; lastly, whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave, whatsoever hath passion or admiration in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wily subtleties and refluxes of man's thoughts from within,—all these things with a solid and tractable smoothness to paint out and describe; teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue, through all the instances of example, with such delight—to those especially of soft and delicious temper, who will not so much as look upon Truth herself unless they see her elegantly dressed,—that whereas the paths of honesty and good life appear now rugged and difficult, though they be indeed easy and pleasant, they will then appear to all men both easy and pleasant, though they were rugged and difficult indeed. And what a benefit this would be to our youth and gentry may be soon guessed by what we know of the corruption and bane which they suck in daily from the writings and interludes of libidinous and ignorant poetasters, who, having scarce ever heard of that which is the main consistence of a true poem,—the choice of such persons as they ought

* *i. e.* in general, for the most part. In chap. iii. of this book, we meet, "The patients which *most an end* are brought into his hospital." We have not met with the phrase anywhere else.

to introduce, and what is moral and decent to each one,—do for the most part lay up vicious principles in sweet pills to be swallowed down, and make the taste of virtuous documents [instructions] harsh and sour.

But because the spirit of man cannot demean* itself lively in this body without some recreating intermission of labour and serious things, it were happy for the Commonwealth if our magistrates, as in those famous governments of old, would take into their care not only the deciding of our contentions, law-eases, and brawls, but the managing of our public sports and festival-pass-times; that they might be, not such as were authorized a while since,† the provocations of drunkenness and lust, but such as may inure and harden our bodies by martial exercises to all warlike skill and performance; and may civilize, adorn, and make discreet our minds, by the learned and affable meeting of frequent academies, and the procurement of wise and artful recitations, sweetened with eloquent and graceful enticements to the love and practice of justice, temperance, and fortitude, instructing and bettering the nation at all opportunities, that the call of Wisdom and Virtue may be heard everywhere, as Solomon saith: “She crieth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets, in the top of high-places, in the chief concourse, and in the openings of the gates.” Whether this may not be, not only in pulpits, but, after another persuasive method, at set and solemn panegyries, in theatres, porches, or what other place or way may win most upon the people to receive at once both recreation and instruction, let them in authority decide.

The thing which I had to say, and those intentions which have lived within me, ever since I could conceive myself anything worth to my country, I return to crave excuse that urgent reason hath plucked from me, by an abortive and foredated discovery. And the accomplishment of them lies not but in a power above man’s to promise. But that none hath by more studious ways endeavoured, and with more unwearied spirit that none shall, that I dare almost aver of myself, as far as life and free leisure will extend, and that the land had once enfranchised herself from this impertinent yoke of prelacy, under whose inquisitorious and tyrannical duncery no free and splendid wit can flourish. Neither do I think it shame to covenant with any knowing reader, that for

* *i. e.* conduct, *démener* Fr., *dimenare* It.

† Alluding again to the Book of Sports.

some few years yet I may go on trust with him toward the payment of what I am now indebted, as being a work, not to be raised from the heat of youth, or the vapours of wine,—like that which flows at waste from the pen of some vulgar amourist, or the trencher-fury of a riming parasite,—nor to be obtained by the invocation of Dame Memory and her Siren daughters,* but by devout prayer to that Eternal Spirit, who can enrich with all utterance and knowledge, and sends out his Seraphim, with the hallowed fire of his altar, to touch and purify the lips of whom he pleases. To this must be added industrious and select reading, steady observation, insight into all seemly and generous arts and affairs; till which in some measure be compassed at mine own peril and cost;† I refuse not to sustain this expectation from as many as are not loath to hazard so much credulity upon the best pledges that I can give them.

Although it nothing content me to have disclosed thus much beforehand, but that I trust hereby to make it manifest with what small willingness I endure to interrupt the pursuit of no less hopes than these, and leave a calm and pleasing solitariness, fed with cheerful and confident thoughts, to embark in a troubled sea of noises and hoarse disputes, put from beholding the bright countenance of Truth in the quiet and still air of delightful studies, to come into the dim reflection of hollow antiquities sold by the seeming bulk, and there be fain to club quotations with men whose learning and belief lies in marginal stufflings, who when they have, like good sumpters, laid ye down their horse-loads of citations and Fathers at your door, with a rhapsody of who and who were bishops here or there,—ye may take off their packsaddles, their day's work is done, and episcopacy, as they think, stoutly vindicated. Let any gentle apprehension, that can distinguish learned pains from unlearned drudgery, imagine what pleasure or profoundness can be in this, or what honour to deal against such adversaries. But, were it the meanest under-service, if God by his secretary Conscience enjoin it, it were sad for me, if I should draw back;—for me especially now when all men offer their aid to help, ease, and lighten the difficult labours of the Church, to whose service, by the intentions of my parents and friends, I was destined of a

* The Muses, alluding to the songs of the Sirens, which Plato places on the celestial spheres.

† Again alluding to his independent circumstances.

child ; and in mine own resolutions, till coming to some maturity of years and perceiving what tyranny had invaded the Church, that he who would take orders must subscribe *slave* and take an oath wirthal, which, unless he took with a conscience that would stretch [stretch], he must either straight perjure or split his faith, I thought it better to prefer a blameless silence before the sacred office of speaking, bought and begun with servitude and forswearing. Howsoever thus church-outed by the prelates, hence may appear the right I have to meddle in these matters, as before the necessity and constraint appeared.

His object in the second book is to show “that Prelaty opposeth the reason and end of the Gospel” in its outward form by its pomp and magnificence, in its numerous vain and useless ceremonies, and in its cruel and intolerant jurisdiction. In proof he employs acute and vigorous reasoning, strong invective, and ardent declamation. He boldly maintains that the laity are entitled to exercise such offices of discipline in the Church as their spiritual gifts qualify them for exercising, and deduces the most happy consequences from such a practice.

ANIMADVERSIONS ON THE REMONSTRANT'S DEFENCE AGAINST SMECTYNUUS.

In this piece Milton follows the plan of citing the exact words of the Remonstrant, and subjoining an answer to them. The following passages may be quoted.

On the Apostolic Succession :—

See the frowardness of this man ! He would persuade us that the succession and divine right of bishopdom hath been unquestionable through all ages, yet when they bring against him kings, they were irreligious ; popes, they are Antichrist ! By what era of computation, through what Fairy-land would this man deduce the perpetual bead-roll of uncontradicted episcopacy ? The Pope may as well boast his ungainsaid authority to them that will believe that all his contradicitors were either irreligious or heretical.

On the use of the Fathers :—

He bids ask of the old paths, or for the old paths, where or which is the good way ; which implies that all old ways are not good, but that the good way is to be searched [for] with diligence among the old ways, which is a thing that we do in the oldest records we have—the Gospel. And if others may chance to spend more time with you in canvassing later antiquity, I suppose it is not for that they ground themselves thereon, but that they endeavour—by showing the conceptions, uncertainties and disagreements of those volumes, and the easiness of erring or overslipping in such a boundless and vast search—if they may not convince those that are so strongly persuaded thereof, yet to free, ingenuous minds from an over-awful esteem of those more ancient than trusty Fathers, whom custom and fond opinion, weak principles, and the neglect of sounder and superior knowledge, hath exalted so high as to have gained them a blind reverence ; whose books, in bigness and number so endless and immeasurable, I cannot think that either God or Nature, either divine or human wisdom, did ever mean should be a rule or reliance to us in the decision of any weighty and positive doctrine. For certainly every rule and instrument of necessary knowledge that God hath given us ought to be so in proportion as may be wielded and managed by the life of man, without penning him up from the duties of human society ; and such a rule and instrument of knowledge perfectly is the Holy Bible. But he that shall bind himself to make Antiquity his rule, if he read but part,—beside the difficulty of choice,—his rule is deficient and utterly unsatisfying, for there may be other writers of another mind which he hath not seen ; and if he undertake all, the length of man's life cannot extend to give him a full and requisite knowledge of what was done in Antiquity. Why do we therefore stand worshipping and admiring this unactive and lifeless Colossus ? that, like a carved giant terribly menacing to children and weaklings, lifts us his club but strikes not, and is subject to the muting of every sparrow. If you let him rest upon his basis, he may perhaps delight the eyes of some with his huge and mountainous bulk, and the quaint workmanship of his massy limbs ; but if ye go about to take him in pieces, ye mar him ; and if you think, like pygmies, to turn and wind him, whole as he is, beside your vain toil and sweat, he may chance to fall upon your

own heads. Go therefore and use all your art, apply your sledges, your levers, and your iron crows to heave and hale your mighty Polypheme of Antiquity, to the delusion of novices and inexperienced Christians. We shall adhere close to the Scriptures of God, which he hath left us as the just and adequate measure of truth, fitted and proportioned to the diligent study, memory, and use of every faithful man, whose every part consorting and making up the harmonious symmetry of complete instruction, is able to set out to us a perfect man of God, or bishop, thoroughly furnished to all the good works of his charge; and with this weapon, without stepping a foot further, we shall not doubt to batter and throw down your Nebuchadnezzar's image, and crumble it like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, as well the gold of those Apostolic Successors that you boast of as your Constantinian silver, together with the iron, the brass, and the clay of those muddy and strawy ages that follow.

He gives his opinion as follows on the subject of Ordination:—

As for ordination, what is it but the laying on of hands, an outward sign or symbol of admission? It creates nothing, it confers nothing. It is the inward calling of God that makes a minister, and his own painful study and diligence that manures and improves his ministerial gifts. In the primitive times many, before ever they had received ordination from the Apostles, had done the Church noble service, as Apollos and others. It is but an orderly form of receiving a man already fitted, and committing to him a particular charge. The employment of preaching is as holy and far more excellent; the care also and judgement to be used in the winning of souls—which is thought to be sufficient in every worthy minister—is an ability above that is required in ordination; for many may be able to judge who is fit to be made a minister that would not be found fit to be made ministers themselves; as it will not be denied that he may be competent judge of a neat picture or elegant poem that cannot limn the like. Why, therefore, we should constitute a superior order in the Church to perform an office which is not only every minister's function, but inferior also to that which he has a confessed right to, and why this superiority should remain thus usurped, some wise Epimenides tell us.

After some severe remarks on episcopal jurisdiction, he gives the following apologue or *law-case*, as he terms it.

A certain man of large possessions had a fair garden, and kept therein an honest and laborious servant, whose skill and profession was to set or sow all wholesome herbs and delightful flowers, according to every season, and whatever else was to be done in a well-husbanded nursery of plants and fruits. Now, when the time was come that he should cut his hedges, prune his trees, look to his tender slips, and pluck up the weeds that hindered their growth, he gets him up by break of day, and makes account to do what was needful in his garden: and who would think that any other should know better than he how the day's work was to be spent? Yet, for all this there comes another strange gardener, that never knew the soil, never handled a dibble or spade to set the least potherb that grew there, much less had endured an hour's sweat or chillness, and yet challenges as his right the binding or unbinding of every flower, the clipping of every bush, the weeding and worming of every bed, both in that and all other gardens thereabout. The honest gardener, that ever since the daypeep till now the sun was grown somewhat rank, had wrought painfully about his banks and seedplots, at his commanding voice turns suddenly about with some wonder; and although he could have well beteemed* to have thanked him for the ease he proffered, yet, loving his own handiwork, modestly refused him, telling him withal, that for his part, if he had thought much of his own pains, he could for once have committed the work to one of his fellow-labourers, for as much as it is well known to be a matter of less skill and less labour to keep a garden handsome than it is to plant it or contrive it; and that he had already performed himself. "No," said the stranger, "this is neither for you nor your fellows to meddle with, but for me only, that am for this purpose in dignity far above you; and the provision which the lord of the soil allows me in this office is, and that with good reason, tenfold your wages." The gardener smiled and

* This word seems to be used here, as in—

That he might not *beteem* the winds of heaven

Visit her face too roughly, (*Hamlet*, i. 2.)

in the sense of *permit, allow*. In A. S. *týman* is to vouch, warrant, witness.

shook his head; but what was determined, I cannot tell you till the end of this Parliament.*

APOLOGY FOR SMECTYNUUS.

As his opponent had made a most virulent and unjustifiable attack on his private character, Milton, after having at great length explained his motives for entering on this controversy and vindicated his conduct in it, proceeds to give the following interesting particulars respecting his life and pursuits.

I must be thought, if this libeller—for now he shows himself to be so—can find belief, after an inordinate and riotous youth spent at the University, to have been at length “vomited out thence.” For which commodious lie, that he may be encouraged in the trade another time, I thank him; for it hath given me an apt occasion to acknowledge publicly, with all grateful mind, the more than ordinary favour and respect which I found, above any of my equals, at the hands of those courteous and learned men, the fellows of that college wherein I spent some years: who, at my parting, after I had taken two degrees as the manner is, signified many ways how much better it would content them that I would stay, as by many letters full of kindness and loving respect, both before that time and long after, I was assured of their singular good affection toward me: which being likewise propense to all such as were for their studious and civil life worthy of esteem, I could not wrong their judgements and upright intentions so much as to think I had that regard from them for other cause than that I might be still encouraged to proceed in the honest and laudable courses, of which they apprehended I had given good proof. And to those ingenuous and friendly men, who were ever the countenancers of virtuous and

* That is, whether episcopacy would be retained or abolished. For our own parts, though we acknowledge that the bishop and the presbyter were originally the same, and that the offices did not separate perhaps till the second century, yet we approve of episcopacy as a distinct order, and would willingly see the whole patronage of the Church, under proper restrictions, in the hands of the prelates, and themselves really elective.

hopeful wits, I wish the best and happiest things that friends in absence wish one to another.

As for the common [general] approbation or dislike of that place, as now it is, that I should esteem or disesteem myself or any other the more for that, too simple and too credulous is the confuter, if he think to obtain with me or any right discerner. Of small practice were that physician who could not judge, by what she or her sister hath of long time vomited, that the worser stuff she strongly keeps in her stomach, but the better she is ever keecking at, and is queasy. She vomits now out of sickness, but ere it will be well with her she must vomit by strong physic. In the meantime that *suburb-sink*, as this rude scavenger calls it, and more than scurrilously taunts it with the plague, having a worse plague in his middle entrail,—that suburb wherein I dwell shall be in my account a more honourable place than his University; which, as in the time of her better health and my younger judgement, I never greatly admired, so now much less. But he follows me to the city, still usurping and forging beyond his book-notice, which only he affirms to have had, “and where my morning-haunts are he wisses not.” It is wonder that, being so rare an alehymist of slander, he could not extract that as well as the university-vomit and the suburb-sink, which his art could distill so cunningly. But, because his lembie fails him, to give him and envy the more vexation, I will tell him.

Those morning-haunts are, where they should be, at home, not sleeping or conceoeting the surfeits of an irregular feast, but up and stirring; in winter, often ere the sound of any bell awake men to labour or to devotion; in summer, as oft with the bird that first rouses, or not much tardier; to read good authors, or cause them to be read, till the attention be weary or memory have its full fraught: then with useful and generous labours preserving the body’s health and hardiness, to render lightsome, clear, and not lumpish obedience to the mind, to religion, and our country’s liberty, when it shall require firm hearts in sound bodies to stand and cover their stations rather than see the ruin of our protestation and the enforcement of a slavish life.

These are the morning-practices; proceed now to the afternoon. “In playhouses,” he says, “and the bordelloes.” Your intelligence? unfaithful spy of Canaan. He gives in his evidence that “there he hath traced me.” Take him at his word, readers. But,

let him bring good sureties, ere ye dismiss him, that while he pretended to dog others, he did not turn in for his own pleasure; for so much in effect he concludes against himself, not contented to be caught in every other gin, but he must be such a novice as to be still hampered in his own hemp. In the Animadversions, saith he, I find the mention of old cloaks, false beards, night-walkers, and salt lotion; therefore the Animadvertor haunts playhouses and bordellos; for if he did not, how could he speak of such gear? Now, that he may know what it is to be a child and yet to meddle with edged tools, I turn his antistrophon upon his own head. The Confuter knows that these things are the furniture of playhouses and bordellos, therefore, by the same reason, “the Confuter himself has been traced in these places.” Was it such a dissolute speech, telling of some politicians, who were wont to eavesdrop in disguises,—to say they were often liable to a night-walking cudgeller or the emptying of a urinal? What if I had written, as your friend, the author of the aforesaid *Mime*, *Mundus Alter et Idem*,* to have been ravished like some young Cephalus or Hylas, by a troop of camping housewives in Viraginea, and that he was there forced to swear himself an uxorious varlet; then after a long servitude to have come into Aphrodisia, that pleasant country, that gave such a sweet smell to his nostrils, among the shameless courtesans of Desvergonia? Surely, he would then have concluded me as constant at the bordello as the galley-slave at his oar.

But since there is such necessity to the hearsay of a tire,† a periwig, or a vizard, that plays must have been seen, what difficulty was there in that? When in the colleges so many of the young divines, and those in next aptitude to divinity,‡ have been seen so often upon the stage, writhing and unboning their clergy-limbs to all the antic and dishonest gestures of Trinucleos, buffoons, and bawds, prostituting the shame of that ministry which either they had or were wellnigh having, to the eyes of courtiers and court-ladies, with their grooms and mademoiselles.§ There,

* Bishop Hall, the father of Milton’s opponent.

† *Hearsay* is the hearing of, knowing about; *tire* is a head-dress.

‡ Divinity-students.

§ That is, as we should now say, “with their own men and their lady’s-maids.” It was the custom to go thus attended. We may see

while they acted and over-acted, among other young scholars I was a spectator ; they thought themselves gallant men, and I thought them fools ; they made sport, and I laughed ; they mispronounced, and I disliked ; and, to make up the Atticism,* they were out, and I hissed. Judge now whether so many good text-men were not sufficient to instruct me of false beards and vizards, without more expositors. And how can this Confuter take the face to object to me the seeing of that which his reverend prelates allow and incite their young divines to act ? For if it be unlawful to sit and behold a mercenary comedian personating that which is least unseemly for a hireling to do, how much more blameful is it to endure the sight of as vile things acted by persons either entered or presently to enter into the ministry, and how much more foul and ignominious for them to be the actors !

After a brief apology for the appearance of egotism, he then proceeds to give the following account of his studies.

I had my time, readers, as others have, who have good learning bestowed upon them, to be sent to those places where the opinion was it might be soonest attained ; and, as the manner is, was not unstudied in those authors which are most commended. Whereof some were grave orators and historians, whose matter methought I loved indeed, but as my age then was, so I understood them ; others were the smooth elegiac poets, whereof the schools are not scarce,† whom both for the pleasing sound of their numerous‡ writing, which in imitation I found most easy and most agreeable to Nature's part in me ; and for their matter,—which what it is

in Pepys' Diary, that even *his* wife was accompanied to the theatre by her maid.

In the whole passage, he alludes to the custom of performing plays at the Universities, so common at the time. Even so late as 1747, a play named *The Grateful Fair*, by Christopher Smart, was, we are told, performed at Pembroke College, Cambridge. Plays used also to be performed at the Inns of Court. The practice is still continued in Harrow and Westminster schools.

* Because he is here imitating a well-known passage in Demosthenes' speech against *Aeschines*.

† *i.e.* which are much read in the schools.

‡ *Numerosus*, having numbers or harmony.

there be few who know not,—I was so allured to read, that no recreation came to me better welcome: for, that it was then those years with me which are excused, though they be least severe,* I may be saved the labour to remember ye. Whence having observed them to account it the chief glory of their wit, in that they were ablest to judge, to praise, and by that could esteem themselves worthiest to love those high perfections which under one or other name they took to celebrate,† I thought with myself by every instinct and presage of nature, which is not wont to be false, that what emboldened them to this task might, with such diligence as they used, embolden me; and that what judgement, wit, or elegance was my share would herein best appear and best value itself, by how much more wisely and with more love of virtue I should chuse—let rude ears be absent—the object of not unlike praises. For, albeit these thoughts to some will seem virtuous and commendable, to others only pardonable, to a third sort perhaps idle, yet the mentioning of them now will end in serious.

Nor blame it, readers, in those years to propose to themselves such a reward as the noblest dispositions above other things in this life have sometimes preferred; whereof not to be sensible, when good and fair in one person meet, argues both a gross and shallow judgement, and withal an ungentle and swainish breast. For, by the firm settling of these persuasions, I became, to my best memory, so much a proficient, that if I found those authors anywhere speaking unworthy things of themselves, or unchaste of those names which before they had extolled, this effect it wrought with me,—from that time forward their art I still applauded, but the men I deplored, and above them all preferred the two famous renouners of Beatrice and Laura,‡ who never write but honour of them to whom they devote their verse, displaying sublime and pure thoughts, without transgression. And long it was not after when I was confirmed in this opinion, that he, who would not be frustrate of his hope to write well hereafter in laudable things, ought himself to be a true poem,—that is, a composition and pattern of the best and honourablest things,—not presuming to sing

* *i. e.* most inclined to love, and to light and amorous reading.

† It certainly must have been by a peculiar kind of mental alchemy, that he could extract such pure materials from Tibullus, Propertius, and Ovid.

‡ Dante and Petrarcha.

high praises of heroic men or famous cities, unless he have in himself the experience and the practice of all that which is praiseworthy. These reasonings, together with a certain nice ness of nature, an honest haughtiness and self-esteem, either of what I was or what I might be,—which let envy call pride,—and lastly that modesty whereof, though not in the title-page,* yet here, I may be excused to make some beseeming profession,—all these, uniting the supply of their natural aid together, kept me still above those low descents of mind, beneath which he must deject and plunge himself that can agree to saleable and unlawful prostitutions.

Next—for hear me out now, readers, that I may tell whither my younger feet wandered,—I betook me among those lofty fables and romances which recount in solemn cantos the deeds of knighthood founded by our victorious kings, and from hence had in renown over all Christendom. There I read, in the oath of every knight, that he should defend to the expense of his best blood, or even of his life, if it so befell him, the honour and chastity of virgin or matron; from whence even then I learned what a noble virtue chastity sure must be, to the defence of which so many worthies, by such a dear adventure of themselves, had sworn. And if I found in the story afterwards any of them by word or deed breaking that oath, I judged it the same fault of the poet as that which is attributed to Homer, to have written indecent things of the gods. Only this my mind gave me, that every free and gentle spirit, without that oath, ought to be born a knight, nor needed to expect the gilt spur or the laying a sword upon his shoulder to stir him up, both by his counsel and his arms, to secure and protect the weakness of attempted chastity. So that even these books, which to many others have been the fuel of wantonness and loose living,†—I cannot think how, unless by divine indulgence,—proved to me so many incitements, as ye have heard, to the love and steadfast observation of that virtue which abhors the society of bordelloes.

Thus from the laureat fraternity of poets riper years and the ceaseless round of study and reading led me to the shady spaces‡ of philosophy, but chiefly to the divine volumes of Plato and his

* The title of his adversary's book was *A Modest Refutation*, etc.

† He probably had Ariosto chiefly in view.

‡ *Spatia*, courses or rounds of the circus.

equal [contemporary] Xenophon: where if I should tell ye what I learnt of chastity and love,—I mean that which is truly so, whose charming-cup is only virtue, which she bears in her hand to those who are worthy; the rest are cheated with a thick intoxicating potion, which a certain soreeress, the abuser of love's name, carries about,—and how the first and chiefest office of love begins and ends in the soul, producing those happy twins of her divine generation, knowledge and virtue. With such abstracted sublimities as these, it might be worth your listening, readers, as I may one day hope to have ye, in a still time, when there shall be no chiding; not in these noises, the adversary, as ye know, barking at the door or searching for me at the bordelloes, where it may be he has lost himself and raps up, without pity, the sage and rheumatic old prelatess, with all her young Corinthian laity, to inquire for such a one.

Last of all,—not in time, but as perfection is last,—that care was always had of me with my earliest capacity, not to be negligently trained in the precepts of the Christian religion. This that I have hitherto related hath been to show, that though [even if] Christianity had been but slightly taught me, yet a certain reservedness of natural disposition, and moral discipline learnt out of the noblest philosophy, was enough to keep me in disdain of far less incontinencies than this of the bordello. But, having had the doctrine of Holy Scripture unfolding those chaste and high mysteries with timeliest care infused, that “the body is for the Lord, and the Lord for the body;” thus also I argued with myself, that if unchastity in a woman, whom St. Paul terms the glory of man, be such a scandal and dishonour, then certainly in a man, who is both the image and glory of God, it must, though commonly not so thought, be much more deflouring and dishonourable; in that he sins both against his own body, which is the perfecter sex, and his own glory, which is in the woman, and, that which is worst, against the image and glory of God, which is in himself. Nor did I slumber over that place, expressing such high rewards of ever accompanying the Lamb, with those celestial songs, to others inapprehensible, but not to those who were not defiled with women; which doubtless means fornication,* for marriage must not be called a defilement.

* This is the opinion of the best modern commentators.

AREOPAGITICA.

Milton commences this address to the Parliament with many compliments to their love of truth, justice, and liberty, which made them “as willing to repeal any act of their own setting forth, as any set forth by their predecessors.” Emboldened by this, he calls on them to reconsider their late order “to regulate printing:—that no book, pamphlet, or paper shall be henceforth printed, unless the same be first approved and licensed by such, or at least one of such, as shall be thereto appointed.” With this view, he proceeds to inform them by whom this system of licensing was first invented; next, to show that it “avails nothing to the suppressing of scandalous, seditious, and libellous books;” and, finally, that “it will be primely to the discouragement of all learning and the stop of truth, not only by disexercising and blunting our abilities in what we know already, but by hindering and cropping the discovery that might be yet further made both in civil and religious wisdom.”

Having previously stated his opinion that books, like men, should be watched and punished as malefactors when they are found transgressing, he takes an historic view of the mode of procedure in ancient Greece and Rome, and under the Roman empire; in none of which appears any trace of examining books previous to publication. Even the reading of books that were condemned was not prohibited till the popes had obtained temporal authority, and even they used their power with moderation till the time of the Reformation, when the Council of Trent and the Inquisition devised, or developed, the Index Expurgatorius, and forbade anything to be published without the *Imprimatur* “of two or three glutton-

ous friars.” “ And this was the rare morsel so officiously snatched up, and so illfavouredly imitated by our Inquisitient bishops, and the attendant Minorites, their chaplains.”

He then answers the argument, that though the inventors were bad, the thing itself may be good, and proceeds to show that more good than evil must result from reading books of all kinds. In the course of his argument he makes the following observations :—

I conceive therefore that when God did enlarge the universal diet of man’s body,—saving ever the rules of temperance,—he then also as before left arbitrary the dieting and repasting of our minds, as wherein every mature man might have to exercise his own leading capacity. How great a virtue is temperance! how much of moment through the whole life of man! Yet God commits the managing so great a trust, without particular law or prescription, wholly to the demeanour [management] of every grown man. And therefore when he himself tabled the Jews from heaven, that omer, which was every man’s daily portion of manna, is computed to have been more than might have well sufficed the heartiest feeder thrice as many meals. For those actions which enter into a man rather than issue out of him, and therefore defile not, God uses not to captivate [hold captive] under a perpetual childhood of prescription, but trusts him, with the gift of reason, to be his own chooser. There were but little work left for preaching if law and compulsion should grow so fast upon those things which heretofore were governed only by exhortation. Solomon informs us that much reading is a weariness to the flesh, but neither he nor any other inspired author tells us that such or such reading is unlawful; yet certainly, had God thought good to limit us herein, it had been much more expedient to have told us what was unlawful than what was wearisome.

* * * * *

As therefore the state of man now is, what wisdom can there be to choose, what continence to forbear, without the knowledge of evil? He that can apprehend and consider vice with all her baits and seeming pleasures, and yet abstain, and yet distinguish, and yet prefer that which is truly better, he is the true warfaring

Christian. I cannot praise a fugitive and cloistered virtue, un-exercised and unbreathed, that never sallies out and seeks her adversary, but slinks out of the race, where that immortal garland is to be run for, not without dust and heat. Assuredly we bring not innocence into the world ; we bring impurity much rather. That which purifies us is trial ; and trial is by what is contrary. That virtue therefore which is but a youngling in the contemplation of evil, and knows not the utmost that Vice promises to her followers and rejects it, is but a blank virtue, not a pure ;* her whiteness is but an excremental [superficial] whiteness : which was the reason why our sage and serious poet Spenser - whom I dare be known to think a better teacher than Scotus or Aquinas—describing true temperance under the person of Guyon, brings him with his Palmer through the cave of Mammon,† and the Bower of earthly Bliss, that he might see and know and yet abstain.

Since therefore the knowledge and survey of vice is in this world so necessary to the constituting of human virtue, and the scanning of error to the confirmation of truth, how can we more safely and with less danger scout [make excursion] into the regions of sin and falsity than by reading all manner of tractates, and hearing all manner of reason ? And this is the benefit which may be had of books promiscuously read. But of the harm that may result henee, three kinds are usually reckoned. First is feared the infection that may spread. But then all human learning and controversy in religious points must remove out of the world. Yea, the Bible itself : for that oftentimes relates blasphemy not nicely ; it describes the carnal sense of wicked men not elegantly ; it brings in holiest men passionately murmuring against Providence through all the arguments of Epicurus ;‡ in other great disputes it answers dubiously and darkly to the common reader. And ask a Talmudist what ails the modesty of his marginal Keri that Moses and all the Prophets cannot persuade him to pronounce the textual Chetiv.§ For these causes we know the Bible itself put by the Papist into the first rank of prohibited

* Sir Thomas Overbury said truly, in his Wife :—

- She is most truly good who best knows why.

† His memory deceived him here, for the Palmer was not with Guyon in the cave.

‡ In the Ecclesiastes.

§ Of these terms the latter is the text, the former the marginal correction.

books. The ancientest Fathers must be next removed, as Clement of Alexandria, and that Eusebian book of Evangelic Preparation, transmitting [passing] our ears through a hoard of heathen obscenities to receive the Gospel. Who finds not that Irenaeus, Epiphanius, Jerome, and others discover more heresies than they well confute, and that oft for heresy which is the truer opinion?

He then replies to the argument, that the language of these and of the heathen writers is not generally known, by showing that they are known sufficiently for all evil purposes.

But, on the other side, that infection which is from books of controversy in religion is more doubtful and dangerous to the learned than to the ignorant; and yet these books must be permitted, untouched by the licenser. It will be hard to instance where any ignorant man hath been ever seduced by any Papistical book in English, unless it were commended and expounded to him by some of that clergy; and indeed all such tractates, whether false or true, are as the propheey of Isaiah was to the eunuch, not to be “understood without a guide.” But of our priests and doctors how many have been corrupted by studying the comments of Jesuits and Sorbonists, and how fast they could transfuse that corruption into the people, our experience is both late and sad. It is not forgot since the acute and distinct Arminius was perverted merely by the perusing of a nameless discourse written at Delft, which at first he took in hand to confute.

But, it was alleged, we should not expose ourselves to temptations without necessity, nor employ our time in vain things. To both these objections he replies, that “to all men such books are not temptations nor vanities, but useful drugs and materials wherewith to temper and compose effective and strong medicines, which man’s life cannot want [do without]; while the rest, such as children and childish men, may be exhorted to forbear, but cannot be kept from them by all the licensing in the world.” He then comes to the authority of Plato, who being a man, he says, “of high authority indeed,—but

least of all for his Commonwealth,—in the book of his Laws, which no city ever yet received, fed his fancy with making many edicts to his airy burgomasters, which they who otherwise admire him wish had been rather buried and excused in the genial cups of an Academic night-sitting.”* He shows how utterly impracticable any scheme of this kind must be, and that under it music, dress, and everything else should be put under the licenser as well as books.

To sequester [ourselves] out of the world into Atlantie and Utopian polities,† which never can be drawn into use, will not mend our condition; but to ordain wisely, as in this world of evil, in the midst whereof God hath placed us unavoidably. Nor is it Plato’s licensing of books will do this, which necessarily pulls along with it so many other kinds of licensing as will make us all both ridiculous and weary, and yet frustrate; but those unwritten, or at least unconstraining, laws of virtuous education, religious and civil nurture, which Plato there mentions as the bonds and ligaments of the Commonwealth, the pillars and the sustainers of every written statute. These they be which will bear chief sway in such matters as these, when all licensing will be easily eluded. Impunity and remissness for certain are the bane of a commonwealth; but here the great art lies—to discern in what the law is to bid restraint and punishment, and in what things persuasion only is to work. If every action which is good or evil in man at ripe years were to be under pittance, prescription, and compulsion, what were virtue but a name? what praise could be then due to well-doing? what gramercy [thanks] to be sober, just, and continent?

Many there be that complain of Divine Providence for suffering Adam to transgress. Foolish tongues! When God gave him reason, he gave him freedom to choose; for reason is but choosing. He had been else a mere artificial Adam, such an Adam as he is in the motions.‡ We ourselves esteem not of that obedience or

* Alluding to Plato’s Banquet.

† He means the New Atalantis of Bacon and the Utopia of More.

‡ This was the old name of puppet-shows.

love, or gift, which is of force; God therefore left him free, set before him a provoking object, ever almost in his eyes. Herein consisted his merit, herein the right of his reward, the praise of his abstinence. Wherefore did he create passions within us, pleasures round about us, but that these rightly tempered are the very ingredients of virtue? They are not skilful considerers of human things who imagine to remove sin by removing the matter of sin. For, beside that it is a huge heap increasing under the very act of diminishing, though some part of it may for a time be withdrawn from some persons, it cannot from all, in such a universal thing as books are. And when this is done, yet the sin remains entire. Though ye take from a covetous man all his treasure, he has yet one jewel left—ye cannot bereave him of his covetousness. Banish all objects of lust, shut up all youth into the severest discipline that can be exercised in any hermitage, ye cannot make them chaste that came not thither so. Such great care and wisdom is required to the right managing of this point!

Suppose we could expel sin by this means; look! how much we thus expel of sin, so much we expel of virtue; for the matter of them both is the same. Remove that, and ye remove them both alike. This justifies the high providence of God, who, though he commands us temperance, justice, continence, yet pours out before us, even to a profuseness, all desirable things, and gives us minds than can wander beyond all limit and satiety. Why should we then affect a rigour contrary to the manner of God and of nature, by abridging or scanting those means which books freely permitted are to the trial of virtue and the exercise of truth? It would be better done to learn that the law must needs be frivolous which goes to restrain things uncertainly, and yet equally working to good and evil; and, were I the chooser, a dram of well-doing should be preferred before many times as much the forcible hindrance of evil-doing. For God sure esteems the growth and completing of one virtuous person more than the restraint of ten vicious. And albeit whatever things we hear or see, sitting, walking, travelling, or conversing, may be fitly called our book, and is of the same effect that writings are; yet grant the thing to be prohibited were only books, it appears that this order hitherto is far insufficient to the end which it intends, etc.

He then shows how utterly impracticable this plan of

licensing is, and next proceeds to the proof of its acting as a discouragement to learning, and being an insult to learned men. Having gone through this matter, he thus addresses the Parliament:—

And lest some should persuade ye, Lords and Commons, that these arguments of learned men's discouragement at this your order are mere flourishes and not real, I could recount what I have seen and heard in other countries, where this kind of Inquisition tyrannizes; when I have sat among their learned men—for that honour I had—and been counted happy to be born in such a place of philosophic freedom as they supposed England was, while themselves did nothing but bemoan the servile condition into which learning amongst them was brought; that this was it which had damped the glory of Italian wits, that nothing had been there written now these many years but flattery and fustian. There it was that I found and visited the famous Galileo, grown old a prisoner to the Inquisition, for thinking in astronomy otherwise than the Franciscan and Dominican licensers thought.* And though I knew that England then was groaning loudest under the prelatical yoke, nevertheless I took it for a pledge of future happiness that other nations were so persuaded of her liberty. Yet was it beyond my hope that those worthies were then breathing in her air who should be her leaders to such a deliverance as shall never be forgotten by any revolution of time that this world hath to finish. When that was once begun it was as little in my fear that what words of complaint I heard among learned men of other parts uttered against the Inquisition, the same I should hear by as learned men at home uttered in time of Parliament against an order of licensing: and that so generally, that, when I had disclosed myself a companion of their discontent, I might say—if without envy—that he whom an honest quaestorship had endeared to the Sicilians was not more by them importuned against Verres, than the favourable opinion which I had among many who honour ye, and are known and respected by ye, loaded me with entreaties and persuasions that I would not despair to lay together that which just reason should bring into my mind toward the removal of an undeserved thraldom upon learning.

* And than Milton himself thought. Galileo was not a prisoner when Milton was in Italy.

That this is not therefore the disburdening of a particular fancy, but the common grievance of all those who had prepared their minds and studies above the vulgar pitch, to advance truth in others, and from others to entertain it, thus much may satisfy. And in their name, I shall for neither friend nor foe conceal what the general murmur is : that if it come to Inquisitioning again and licensing, and that we are so timorous of ourselves and suspicious of all men, as to fear each book and the shaking of each leaf, before we know what the contents are ; if some who but of late were little better than silenced from preaching shall come now to silence us from reading, except what they please—it cannot be guessed what is intended by some but a second tyranny over learning, and will soon put it out of controversy that bishops and presbyters are the same to us, both name and thing.*

He then expands this last thought, and exposes the hypocrisy of those who maintained “while bishops were to be baited down, then all presses might be open ; it was the people’s birthright and privilege in time of Parliament, it was the breaking forth of light ;” but who, when they had gained their ends, sought to reimpose the fetters on the press. Next, he shows that this practice, “instead of suppressing sects and schisms, raises them and invests them with a reputation.” It may also, he says, prove a step-dame to truth, “by disenabling us to the maintenance of what is known already.”

Well knows he who uses to consider that our faith and knowledge thrives by exercise, as well as our limbs and complexion.† Truth is compared in Scripture to a streaming fountain ; if her waters flow not in a perpetual progression, they sicken into a muddy pool of conformity and tradition. A man may be a heretic in the truth ; and if he believe things only because his pastor says so or the Assembly so determines, without knowing other reason, though his belief be true, yet the very truth he holds becomes his

* See above, p. 201.

† That is, constitution, as in “he was of a sanguine complexion,” and such-like phrases.

heresy. There is not any burden that some would gladder post off to another than the charge and care of their religion ; there be—who knows not that there be ?—of Protestants and professors who live and die in as errant and implicit faith as any lay-papist of Loretto.

A wealthy man, addicted to his pleasures and to his profits, finds religion to be a traffic so entangled and of so many fiddling accounts, that of all mysteries he cannot skill to keep a stock going upon that trade. What should he do ? Fain he would have the name to be religious, fain he would bear up with his neighbours in that. What does he therefore ? but resolves to give over toiling, and to find himself out some factor, to whose care and credit he may commit the managing of his religious affairs—some divine of note and estimation that must be. To him he adheres, resigns the whole warehouse of his religion, with all the locks and keys, into his custody ; and indeed makes the very person of this man his religion, esteems his associating with him a sufficient evidence and commendatory of his own piety : so that a man may say his religion is now no more within himself, but is become a dividual movable, and goes and comes near him according as that good man frequents the house. He entertains him, gives him gifts, feasts him, lodges him. His religion comes home at night, prays, is liberally supped, and sumptuously laid to sleep, rises, is saluted ; and, after the malmsey or some well-spiced brewage and [being] better breakfasted than He whose morning-appetite would have gladly fed on green figs between Bethany and Jerusalem, his religion walks abroad at eight, and leaves his kind entertainer in the shop, trading all day without his religion.

Another sort there be, who when they hear that all things shall be ordered, all things regulated and settled, nothing written but what passes through the customhouse of certain publicans, that have the tonnaging and poundaging of all free-spoken truth, will straight give themselves up into your hands. Make them and cut them out what religion ye please. There be delights, there be recreations and jolly pastimes that will fetch the day about from sun to sun, and rock the tedious year as in a delightful dream. What need they torture their heads with that which others have taken so strictly and so unalterably into their own purveying ? These are the fruits which a dull ease and cessation of our knowledge will bring forth among the people. How goodly and how to be

wished were such an obedient unanimity as this! What a fine conformity would it starch us into! Doubtless a staunch and solid piece of framework as any January could freeze together.

To the clergy themselves the licensing system would be injurious, as it would cause a stagnation of intellect among them when they had nothing to contend against. But to the nation in general, the loss and detriment that it would cause would be “more than if some enemy at sea should stop up all our havens and ports and creeks; it hinders and retards the importation of our richest merchandise—truth.”

Truth indeed came once into the world with her divine Master, and was a perfect shape most glorious to look on. But when he ascended, and his Apostles after him were laid asleep, then straight arose a wicked race of deceivers, who—as that story goes of the Egyptian Typhon with his conspirators, how they dealt with the good Osiris—took the virgin Truth, hewed her lovely form into a thousand pieces, and scattered them to the four winds. From that time ever since, the sad friends of Truth, such as durst appear, imitating the careful search that Isis made for the mangled body of Osiris, went up and down, gathering up limb by limb still as they could find them. We have not yet found them all, Lords and Commons, nor ever shall do till her Master’s second coming. He shall bring together every joint and member, and shall mould them into an immortal feature of loveliness and perfection. Suffer not these licensing prohibitions to stand at every place of opportunity, forbidding and disturbing them that continue seeking, that continue to do our obsequies to the torn body of our martyred saint.

The rest of the piece is devoted to an eloquent appeal to the Parliament, not by the imposition of this yoke to check the progress of the truth and of reformation which God is setting forth in the world, and in which “he reveals himself to his servants, and, as his manner is, first to his Englishmen.”

I say, as his manner is, first to us, though we mark not the me-

thod of his counsels, and are unworthy. Behold now this vast city, a city of refuge, the mansion-house of Liberty, encompassed and surrounded with his protection. The shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers working to fashion out the plates and instruments in defence of beleaguered Truth than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas, wherewith to present, as with their homage and fealty, the approaching reformation ; others as fast reading, trying all things, assenting to the force of reason and convincement.

* * . * * *

Methinks I see in my mind a noble and puissant people, rousing herself like a strong man after sleep, and shaking her invincible locks. Methinks I see her, as an eagle, mewing her mighty youth, and kindling her undazzled eyes at the full midday-beam, purging and unsealing her long-abused sight at the fountain itself of heavenly radiance ; while the whole noise* of timorous and flocking birds, with those also that love the twilight, flutter about amazed at what she means, and in their envious gabble would prognosticate a year of sects and schisms.

Here we pause, advising the reader carefully to peruse the entire of this noble treatise.

HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

Of this work Warburton has given the following judgement :†—“ It is written with great simplicity, contrary to his custom in his prose-writings, and is the better for it. But he sometimes rises into a surprising grandeur in the sentiments and expressions, as at the end of the second book. I never saw anything equal to this, but the conclusion of Sir Walter Raleigh’s History of the World.”

From this decision we dissent. We cannot discern the lauded simplicity ; on the contrary, the inversions and Latinisms, with which it abounds, are far more offensive

* A *noise* was a band of music.

† Milford’s Life of Milton, p. lxxxi.

in mere narrative than when, as in his controversial writings, they are mingled with vigorous reasoning, lofty declamation, or keen invective. Milton in effect was not an historian ; he had not the requisite talent and frame of mind, and he never could have formed his style to the dignified simplicity belonging to the true historian ; and though his work, of course, contains many noble passages, we doubt if any one ever read it through with pleasure. One reason is, he did not possess that historic tact and feeling, which would have made him discern, as it were by instinct, what was of real, what merely of apparent, importance ; and so, what should be omitted, what retained, in order to interest and instruct. He has on the contrary jumbled together all that he found in the annualists. We see nothing remarkable in the passage alluded to by Warburton, and we regard the Iconoclastes as a far nearer approach to ease and simplicity of style.

In the commencement of the third book of his history, Milton, who had witnessed public and suffered private wrong from them, took occasion to draw a true, but most unfavourable, portrait of the Long Parliament and of the Assembly of Divines. Strange as it may seem, this passage was expunged by the licenser when the work was published in 1670. Modern critics have been perplexed by this circumstance ; yet Toland had intimated the real cause,—namely, that the description would answer for the Parliament and hierarchy of the Monarchy as well as for those of the Commonwealth. In fact, with the requisite modifications and limitations, it will answer for those of all times and countries, for man is always the same, self-interest always his moving power ; civil and religious assemblies, boards and commissions, and public men in general, are always alike, and those who have de-

spotic power will use it like despots. Few reflect how much of the public virtue of the present day is owing to the freedom of the press and the extensive circulation of our political journals. Were it not for *them*, public men would be far different from what they are. Still the knowledge and the power of the press is limited, and many have to endure the tyranny, the caprice, and the injustice of men in authority,—

The insolence of office, and the spurns
That patient merit of the unworthy takes.

The following is Milton's account of the Parliament and Assembly :—

A Parliament being called to address [rectify] many things, as it was thought, the people—with great courage and expectation to be eased of what discontented them---chose to their behoof in Parliament such as they thought best affected to the public good; and some indeed men of wisdom and integrity, the rest, to be sure the greater part, whom wealth, or ample possessions, or bold and active ambition, rather than merit, had recommended to the same place.

But, when once the superficial zeal and popular fumes that acted [actuated] their new magistracy were cooled and spent in them, straight every one betook him, setting the commonwealth behind, his private ends before, to do as his own profit or ambition led him. Then was justice delayed, and soon after denied; spite and favour determined all. Hence faction; thence treachery, both at home and in the field; everywhere wrong and oppression; foul and horrid deeds committed daily or maintained, in secret or in open. Some who had been called from shops and warehouses, without other merit, to sit in supreme councils and committees, as their breeding was, fell to huckster the commonwealth: others did thereafter as men could sooth and humour them best; so that he who would give most, or, under covert of hypocritical zeal, insinuate basest, enjoyed unworthily the rewards of learning and fidelity, or escaped the punishment of his crimes and misdeeds. Their votes and ordinances, which men looked should have contained the repealing of bad laws and the immediate constitution

of better, resounded with nothing else but new impositions, taxes and excises, yearly, monthly, weekly; not to reckon the offices, gifts, and preferments bestowed and shared among themselves. They, in the meanwhile, who were ever faithfulest to this cause, and freely aided them in person or with their substance, when they durst not compel either, slighted and bereaved after of their just debts by greedy sequestrations, were tossed up and down after miserable attendance from one committee to another with petitions in their hands; yet either missed the obtaining of their suit, or, though it were at length granted,—mere shame and reason oftentimes extorting from them at least a shew of justice,—yet, by their sequestrators and subcommittees abroad, men for the most part of insatiable hands and noted disloyalty, those orders were commonly disobeyed; which for certain durst not have been without secret compliance [complicity] if not compact with some superiors able to bear them out. Thus were their friends confiscate in their enemies, while they forfeited their debtors to the State, as they called it, but indeed to the ravening seizure of innumerable thieves in office; yet were withal no less burdened in all extraordinary assessments and oppressions than those whom they took to be disaffected; nor were we happier [*i.e.* more fortunate] creditors to what we called the State, than to them who were sequestered as the State's enemies.* For that faith which ought to have been kept as sacred and inviolate as anything holy, the Public Faith, after infinite sums received and all the wealth of the Church not better employed [*sc.* than heretofore], but swallowed up into a private gulf, was not ere long ashamed to confess bankrupt. And now, beside the sweetness of bribery and other gain, with the love of rule, their own guiltiness and the dreaded name of Just Account, which the people had long called for, discovered plainly that there were of their own number who secretly contrived and fomented those troubles and combustions in the land, which openly they sat to remedy; and would continually find such work as should keep them from being ever brought to that terrible stand of laying down their authority for lack of new business, or not drawing it out to any length of time, though upon the ruin of a whole nation.

* In what precedes he had plainly his own case in view; see above, page 126. What he says of debtors and creditors alludes clearly to himself and the property of Mr. Powell.

And if the State were in this plight, Religion was not in much better. To reform which a certain number of divines were called, neither chosen by any rule or custom ecclesiastical, nor eminent for either piety or knowledge above others left out; only as each member of Parliament in his private fancy thought fit, so elected one by one. The most part of them were such as had preached and cried down with great shew of zeal the avarice and pluralities of bishops and prelates; that one cure of souls was a full employment for one spiritual pastor, how able soever, if not a charge rather above human strength. Yet these conscientious men—ere any part of the work done for which they came together, and that on the public salary,—wanted not boldness, to the ignominy and scandal of their pastorlike profession, and especially of their boasted reformation, to seize into their hands or not unwillingly to accept—beside one, sometimes two or more, of the best livings, —collegiate masterships in the universities,* rich lectures in the city, setting sail to all winds that might blow gain into their covetous bosoms: by which means these great rebukers of non-residence were not ashamed to be seen so quickly pluralists and non-residents themselves, to a fearful condemnation doubtless by their own mouths. And yet the main doctrine for which they took such pay, and insisted upon with more vehemence than gospel, was but to tell us in effect that their doctrine was worth nothing and the spiritual power of their ministry less available than bodily compulsion; persuading the magistrate to use it, as a stronger means to subdue and bring in conscience than evangelical persuasion; distrusting the virtue of their own spiritual weapons, which were given them, if they be rightly called, with full warrant of sufficiency to pull down all thoughts and imaginations that exalt themselves against God. But while they taught compulsion without conviction—which not long before they complained of as executed unchristianly against themselves—their intents are clear to have been no better than antichristian; setting up a spiritual tyranny by a secular power, to the advancing of their own authority above the magistrate, whom they would have made their executioner, to punish Church-delinquencies, whereof civil laws have no cognizance.

* This very thing appears to have been done by Milton's old master and friend Thomas Young: see above, page 99.

MILTON AS A WRITER.

As a general quality of Milton's writings in verse, as well as in prose, we may observe the logical order and sequence in which his thoughts and arguments are arranged. It was this secret love of order and method that led him so often to occupy himself with works apparently so alien from the lofty pursuits and aspirations of a poet; such as his Christian Doctrine, a Latin Dictionary, and treatises on grammar and logic; for a mind so constituted finds an inexpressible pleasure in tracing analogies, bringing together parts which lie scattered and dispersed, and forming out of them one harmonious whole. Dante seems to have had a similar turn of mind; but we doubt if it is to be found in any other great poet.

In his earliest poems the language of Milton, while highly poetic, is simple and idiomatic; but in those written toward the close of his academic career, we may discern some tendency to that artificial, unnatural style so prevalent among the most polished nations of Europe in the early part of the seventeenth century, the Marinism of Italy, the Cultismo or Gongorism of Spain, the Précieux of France, and the Euphuism of England. From this however he soon emancipated himself, and there is not a trace of it to be found in the poems written at Horton. In those poems also may be discerned the first

traces of the love for long periods which distinguishes his prose writings. Thus in his poem on Time there are only two sentences, one of eight, the other of fourteen lines; in that At a Solemn Music in the same manner there are only two, the first of twenty-four, the second of only four lines.*

In all Milton's verses the rimes are as exact as in the French and Italian languages. This however is not peculiar to him; it was the case with perhaps all our poets anterior to Waller and Cowley. Thus in the whole of the Faery Queen there are not so many bad rimes as in Pope. Indeed Spenser went to a most reprehensible length in this respect, making his words always rime to the eye as well as to the ear; and by a strange sort of superstition, that barbarous, repulsive, and capricious† system of orthography has been preserved to the present day by the editors and publishers of his poems. We cannot understand why *his* orthographic vagaries should be held so sacred, while the text of all other works of the time, the Bible included, has been reduced to the modern form; and we feel quite sure that if the same were done with the Faery Queen, carefully however preserving the rimes, that the number of its readers would be very much augmented. But it should be done with great judgement and caution.

Our old poets, to effect this accuracy of rime, employed various forms of the same word. Thus, for example, when *shew*—which we look on as the original form‡—

* In one of Horace's Odes (iv. 4), the first sentence is of twenty-eight lines, and in Gresset's *La Chartreuse* there is one of ninety.

† We use this term, for what else but mere caprice could have made him, without any exigence of rime, write *joy ioy, joint ioint*, and such like?

‡ The common practice at the present day of writing *shew*, and pro-

was to rime with *grew, view*, etc., they retained and pronounced *shew*, but if with *low, grow*, etc., they wrote and pronounced *show*. In like manner, they had *strew strow*, *shrew shrow*, *grove greave*, *lose lese*, *hair hear*, etc. Then again, from the commutability of *ā* and *ē*,—as we pronounce *Berkshire*, *clerk*, etc., *Barkshire*, *clark*, etc.,—if *desert*, for instance, was to rime with *art, heart*, they pronounced it *desart*. The same was the case with *ē* and *ī*; *yet* rimed with *bit, fit*, etc. So also *are*, riming with *care, rare*, etc., was pronounced like them;* and *hare* like *cave, rave*, etc.; its invariable sound, by the way, at the end of a verse. *Taste, chaste, waste*, when riming with *fast, last*, etc., were pronounced like them. This however we believe to have been their usual sound at the time.†

We may thus see how our old poets were able to have exact rimes, without being under the necessity of abstaining from the use of a number of important and valuable words.

In Waller however and his successors we find not only such words as the elder poets made to rime together in this manner continued as good rimes after the pronouncing *show*, is to be condemned. To our great surprise, Mr. Dyee has followed it in his valuable edition of Beaumont and Fletcher, even where the rime required *show*.

* It is very remarkable that Fairfax never uses this rime, so common in all the other poets.

† In fact, we have hardly a single clear instance of the *a* in these words being pronounced as in *fate*. As they all came from the French, the *a* may have retained its original sound. The French *a* was also expressed by *au*, as in *chaunge, straunge, raunge, auncient*, etc., which we still retain in some words, as *haunt, daunt*, etc. We doubt if at that time *a* in a final syllable was ever pronounced as in *fate*, except when followed by a single consonant and *e*. Yet, strange enough, they gave this sound to the Latin *a*, making the final *a* of *Hecuba, Helena*, etc., rime with *stay, obey*, etc.

tion had become fixed, but many words used in accord which those poets had never so employed. Thus Waller makes *ear, fear, dear, sea*, etc., rime with *care, air, fair, hair, prey, obey*, etc.; *throw, grow, know, throne*, etc., with *bough, now, down, crown*, etc.; *do, you*, etc., with *know, owe*, etc. Pope, beside many of these, has *face, glass, grace, brass; vain, man; make, back; most, placed; compare, war*, etc. This license we hold to be inexcusable, for there should be *some* similarity of sound.

The distinguishing quality of Milton's prose-writing is vigour, to which is to be added earnestness, dignity, and eloquence, joined with sound logical reasoning from his premisses, which however are not always to be admitted. It must certainly be confessed that his sentences are frequently too long,* and too much involved; and that their structure is classical rather than English, and that he is too fond of using words derived from the Latin in their primitive physical sense. But at the same time we venture to assert that his periods are in general harmonious, and fill the ear agreeably, and with the aid of proper punctuation are perfectly clear and intelligible to any attentive reader; but they certainly *do* require more intension of the mind than most writings of the present or preceding century.† It may in truth be questioned if too much lucidity may not sometimes be a fault, as it causes the attention to be relaxed. We have ourselves often experienced this disadvantage in reading French works.

* He appears to have held short sentences in contempt; for in the *Apol.* for *Sneect.*, when speaking of his opponent, he says, "Instead of well-sized periods, he greets us with a quantity of thumb-ring posies."

† The writings of Milton's contemporary, Baxter, appear to us to offer an excellent model of ease, vigour, and lucidity. The style of Bishop Hall too is extremely good.

From the following sentence of Hallam on the prose style of Milton, we must express our total dissent.

Even in the *Arcopagitica* he frequently sinks in a single instant, as is usual with our old writers, from his highest flights to the ground; his intermixture of familiar with learned phraseology is unpleasing; his structure is affectedly elaborate; and he seldom reaches any harmony. If he turns to invective, as sometimes in this treatise, and more in his *Apology for Smeectymnus*, it is mere ribaldrous vulgarity blended with pedantry; his wit is always poor and without ease. An absentee of idiomatic grace, and a use of harsh inversions, violating the rules of the language, distinguish in general the writings of Milton.*

Every writer should be judged by the laws and usages of his own time, for nothing is more fleeting and capricious than phraseology. The graceful and elegant of one period becomes often the coarse and indecent of another of more real or fancied refinement. Thus the *Spectator* was regarded as a model of propriety at the time it was written, yet now it is frequently withheld from the young and from the fair, on account of its indelicacy. In like manner, in the middle of the last century, Fielding, when dedicating his immortal romance to the virtuous Lord Lyttleton, could say, and we believe with perfect truth, that the reader would find in it “nothing inconsistent with the strictest rules of decency, nor which can offend even the chaste eye in the perusal.” Yet what is the current opinion on that subject at present! Refined and delicate as we fancy the literature of the present day to be, a period of super-refinement may arrive which may withhold some of it from the hands of the young and the fair. The Horatian *Ut silvæ foliis pronos*, etc., applies to ideas and phrases as well as to the single words. We say then, let Milton be judged by the standard of his

* Literature of Europe, iii. 151.

age, and we will maintain that, in all his writings, there is not a single passage to which the expression “ribaldrous vulgarity” can with justice be applied. Neither do we esteem his wit to be so very “poor,” for we meet with passages of genuine humour; though, as he himself avowed, even in his younger days, humour was not his talent. As to his “never reaching any harmony,” we think it sufficient to refer the reader to our extracts from his writings. To our ear, there are few passages in Milton less harmonious than this very passage quoted from Mr. Hallam’s own work.



2 C 2

MILTON'S LATIN WRITINGS.

MILTON, like most of the learned men of the age, wrote in Latin both in prose and verse. The former will, we believe, bear a comparison with any Latin prose of the time, unless we should think that of the natives of the countries which speak languages derived from the Latin to be excepted; as a modern Latin poet, critics are disposed to assign him a place in the first rank. It is not unworthy of notice, that while in English prose he delighted in long and involved sentences, his Latin periods are neither very long nor much involved. This probably arose from his close adherence to his models; for the genius of the Latin language, unlike the Greek, is inclined to brevity and condensation.

To own the truth, we are no great admirers of modern Latin. In the middle and subsequent ages, when modern languages were little cultivated and were rarely learned by strangers, a writer had but a slender chance of being known out of his own country if he used his mother-tongue; men of letters also formed then a more distinct class than they do at present, and they wrote for their own society rather than for the public. The Latin had been transmitted as the language of literature; annals and chronicles were usually written in it, as well as works of science; it was the common language of men

of learning, and he who wrote in it might reckon on being read wherever literature was cultivated. Thus, to take an example from the North, the History of Saxo Grammaticus was well known out of Denmark, where it was written, while the more valuable Heimskringla of Snorro was only known to those who spoke the Icelandic language. Even in the sixteenth century, Mariana, De Thou, Buchanan, and others, wrote their Histories in Latin, in the hope of being more extensively read and known. In like manner, when men of genius and learning were endowed with poetic talent, they exercised it in the language which alone was esteemed by the members of their society. Thus Dante, it is said,—but we have some doubt on the subject,—at first proposed to write his great poem in Latin, and Petrarcha actually did write in that language his Africa, the poem from which he expected his highest fame, while on his vernacular poetry he set comparatively little value. We need not say how posterity has reversed his judgement. Bembo, too, seriously urged Ariosto to write his graceful and sportive poem in Latin; but perhaps he did not know of what species it was intended to be. The Latin poetry however of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries consisted on the whole chiefly of short pieces, such as odes and elegies. It was admired in its day, but for many years it has only been known to a few students. No poet whatever has obtained permanent fame by his Latin verses.

There is, and must be, one incurable defect in all composition in a dead language; it belongs to no particular period, writers of various ages having been used as models and authorities. Let us suppose a Horatius Redivivus, and that some modern Latin poetry were shown to him. He would probably observe on some words or

phrases, that no doubt they were to be found in Terence and Plautus, but that they had become quite antiquated in his time ; others he knew to be in Catullus and Lucretius, but that he and his contemporaries would not have ventured to use them. Of others he would profess himself to be utterly ignorant, though perhaps he would not take on him to assert that they were bad,—these came from Juvenal, Statius, and others, down to Claudian ; finally, he might light on some which he would pronounce to be absolute solecisms and barbarisms,—namely, modern ideas and phraseology in a Latin dress.

In fact, modern Latin poetry is an exotic, a mere hot-house plant, which evermore reminds us that it does not spring from the soil. He that writes it is always held down by secret chains, his wings are clipped, and he can never soar into the regions of poetic space. Spite of himself he must be a mere ape of the ancients, for he may be called on to give his authority for every term he employs. Look at Milton's lines on the deaths of the Bishops of Winchester and Ely, and compare them with those on the Marchioness of Winchester, written about the same time, and the difference between compositions in a living and in a dead language will be apparent. How fortunate was it that he did not write his Ode on the Nativity in Latin ; the same ideas and sentiments might no doubt have been there, but how differently expressed ! Beautiful as Milton's Latin poetry must be confessed to be, it probably does not find, even among those familiar with the language, one reader for fifty readers of his English poetry, and few perhaps ever read his Latin poems without a secret wish that he had written them in English.

We are, it must be again confessed, no friends to

modern Greek and Latin poetry ; and it is to us a matter of sincere regret that in our systems of education so much time should be devoted to it that we think might be far better employed. Possibly Milton himself was of our opinion, for he has not included it in his plan of education. Prose composition in both languages, if not carried too far,* we deem to be of advantage ; what we disapprove of is, making all, without exception, whether favoured by nature or not with poetic power, writers of Greek and Latin verses. The usual reason given is, that it makes them understand better, and relish more highly, the classic poetry. Of this we doubt ; and if it be the truth, why not apply the same principle to their own language ? why not make them writers of blank verse and Spenserian stanzas ? In the French Alexandrines and the Italian Terza and Ottava Rima there are niceties and peculiarities which require to be understood in order to enjoy them fully, and yet we have never heard of any master setting his pupils to compose them. There is further, we think, this evil, that from so much importance being attached to mere versification, a trifling turn of mind, and a habit of attending more to form than to substance, is apt to be engendered.† We would say then, let the structure of the hexameter and the other forms of classic verse be carefully taught in schools, and let prizes, if it be deemed advisable, be offered in the universities, as is the custom, for poetic compositions in

* Latin prose is now little used among us, except for inscriptions and for notes on the Classics, both of which are better in English.

† When Burke said *rēctigāl*, there was a general laugh in the House of Commons at his ignorance of quantity,—they meant accent ; for there was probably not one there who would not have pronounced *mōs*, *dōs*, and *Dic mīhī Damætas* as *Dick my high Damatas*. How many were there among them who understood the Classics as well as Burke ?

the classic languages, and those who have the requisite natural powers will soon appear, as is the case with prizes for English composition ; but do not, for the sake of a favoured few, torture and waste the time of hundreds to whom nature has refused poetic talent. It is Latin verse that we have chiefly in view ; for such are the niceties of the use of cases, tenses, and prepositions in Greek, that we regard it as almost impossible for a modern—it was probably equally so for an ancient Roman—to write in that language so as to escape the charge of barbarism from an old Athenian.*

Milton, as we have seen, would have Latin pronounced in the Italian manner. With respect to the vowels, we quite agree with him ; for what can be more absurd than to pronounce *amare*, for instance, one way in Latin and another in Italian ? As to the consonants, it is of less importance ; for *Cicero* is as near as *Chichero* to the name which the Romans pronounced *Kikero*. There is however one sound which we have introduced, and which Milton's delicate ear abhorred in any language, that we would fain see banished, namely, that of *sh*, for *c* and *t* before *i* ; as *raisho*, a dissyllable, for *ratio*, a trisyllable, with *t* hard. We surely also might pay some attention to quantity, and not pronounce *mōs*, *rōs*, *dōs*, like *moss*, *ross*, *doss*, to say nothing of such a monster as *mīhī* (*mī* high) for the Latin *mīhī*, where *h* merely serves by way of diaeresis, as in the French *trahir*. We seem also to make it a rule to pronounce the vowel of the antepenultimate long when it is accented.

* We must however inform the advocates for the present system that we were not educated on it ; so they may apply to us, if they will, the fable of the fox that lost his tail. Still we think we have as keen a relish as any of them, for the poetry of Greece and Rome.

By our manner of reading Greek and Latin verse, we actually lose nearly all the poetic melody. In hexameters and sapphics, no doubt the two last feet frequently retain their proper melody in our mode of reading, but it is lost almost everywhere else. Most certainly the Greeks and Romans read their verses metrically, that is, with the accent on the first syllable of the dactyl and trochee, on the last of the anapaest and the iamb. This is quite clear, from their lyric poetry, the Odes of Horace for example, for the accents must fall regularly in verses which are to be sung. French verse presents a parallel: the accents in songs are different from those of the same words as ordinarily pronounced; and this seems to have been the case with all French verse, even as low down as Marot, as it was in the Provençal, and to a less extent in Spanish and Italian. It is also the system of our own old verse, as may be seen in Chaucer, Gower, and others, down to the sixteenth century.

We will give one line from the *Aeneis* as an example. Virgil undoubtedly read as follows:—

Mō's ērat Hēspēriō' n Lātio, quæ maxima Roma.

An English scholar would probably read as follows:—

Mōs ērat Hespērio in Lā'tho, etc.

By changing the quantity and the accents, the melody of the first four feet, it is plain, is quite lost. Must not then the melody which we think we find in alcaics, iam-bics, and other forms, be almost purely imaginary? at least, be very different from what the ancients found in them? In Greek we make matters still worse, for neglecting the printed accents which are before our eyes, we introduce the Latin system of placing the accent on the

penultimate when long, and of never placing it on the last syllable.*

We will not say that Milton was so negligent of quantity as to say *moss* for *mōs*, etc., but as we have shown above, he certainly did not read Latin poetry metrically. We doubt if any one did in his time. Bentley, we know, scouted the very idea of that mode of reading it. It has however been revived in Germany, and, we believe, is used by all the scholars of that country.

* We can answer for ourselves that before we learned to read metrically, we often thought that the Greek tragedies might just as well have been printed as prose. Read the fine anapaests with which the Persé begins in the modern manner, and then metrically, and mark the difference! We once got a Greek to read some of Homer for us; he read it by the printed accents, and of course we could not discern even a trace of metric harmony. Yet *he* thought it very fine.

INTRODUCTION TO PARADISE LOST.

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ORIGIN OF PARADISE LOST.

It is probable that Milton early conceived the idea of writing an epic poem : but we have no means of ascertaining the exact time, as there is no hint of such a design in anything he wrote previous to his setting out on his travels. The first intimation we get of such a project is in his verses to Manso, at Naples, in 1639.

O milii si mea sors talem concedat amicum,
 Phœbæos decorasse viros qui tam bene norit,
 Siquando indigenos revocabo in carmina reges,
 Arturumque etiam sub terris bella moventem !
 Aut dicam invictæ sociali fædere mensæ
 Magnanimos heroas ; et, o modo spiritus adsit,
 Frangam Saxonicas Britonum sub Marte phalanges, etc.

From this it appears that, inspired by Spenser and the romantic poets of Italy, the epic which he meditated was to be of a romantic cast, with Arthur the British prince for its hero. From the following passage in the Epitaphium Damonis, written soon after his return to England, it would seem that the poem was to contain all the principal events of British history, from the landing of Brute till the time of Arthur, perhaps by way of narrative or episode, as in the song of a bard, or something of that kind.

Ipse ego Dardanias Rutupina per æquora puppes
 Dicam, et Pandrasidos regnum vetus Inogeniæ,

Brennumque Arviragumque duces, priscumque Belinum,
Et tandem Armoricos Britonum sub lege colonos ;
Tum gravidam Arturo, fatali fraude, Iogernen,
Mendaces vultus, assumptaque Gorlois arma,
Merlini dolus.

At the conclusion of his piece Of Reformation in England, published in 1641, occur the following words :—“Then amidst the hymns and hallelujahs of saints, some one may perhaps be heard offering at high strains in new and lofty measures, to sing and celebrate thy divine mercies and marvellous judgments in this land throughout all ages.” Here again there is an evident allusion to a poem on a British theme. He returns to the subject in his Reason of Church Government, published in the same year, where he still keeps to the idea of selecting his subjects from British history, but is doubtful if he shall treat them in the regular or the irregular epic form, or in the tragic or the lyric manner.* After this we hear nothing more of his poetic designs till the appearance of the Paradise Lost.

Had Milton remained in the peaceful seclusion of Horton, and had the folly of the King and Laud not raised the flames of civil and religious dissension in the realm, we may perhaps assume—judging from the cheerful and romantic tone of the poetry which proceeded from the shades of that rural retreat—that the lyre of the poet would have been tuned to British themes, and Arthur have renewed his wars in strains infinitely beyond any that have ever been, or probably ever will be, devoted to them; and a poem might have appeared vying with the Faery Queen in romantic beauty, and far exceeding it in dignity and sublimity. Mr. Mitford has indulged his imagination in the following conception of what such a poem might have contained.

We should have had tales of chivalrous emprise “of gentle knights that pricked along the plain,” the cruelty of inexorable beauty, and the achievements of unconquerable love. Its scenes would not have been laid in the bowers of Paradise, or by “the thunderous throne” of heaven, nor where the wings of the cherubim fan the mercy-seat; but

* See above, page 352.

amid royal halls, in the palaces of magicians and islands of enchantment. Instead of the serpent, with hairy mane and eye of carbuncle, gliding among the myrtle-thickets of Eden, we should have jousts and tournaments, the streaming of gonfalons, the glitter of dancing plumes, the wailing of barbaric trumpets and the sound of silver clarions ; battles fiercer than those of Fontarabia and fields more gorgeous than that of the Cloth of Gold. What crowds of pilgrims and palmers should we not have beheld journeying to and fro with shell and staff of ivory, filling the port of Joppa with their galleys ? What youthful warriors, the flower of British chivalry, should we not have seen caparisoned and in quest of the holy Sangreal ? The world of reality and the world of vision would have been equally exhausted to supply the materials ; the odours would have been wasted from the “weeping woods” of Araby ; the dazzling mirrors would have been of solid diamond ; and the flowers would have been amaranths from the Land of Faëry. Every warrior would have been clothed in pyropus and in adamant. We should have watched in battle, not the celestial sword of Michael, but the enchanted Caliburn ; we should have had, not the sorrows of Eve and the fall of Adam, but the loves of Angelica and the exploits of Arthur.

Whether such would or would not have been the aspect which the poem would have presented, we cannot pretend to say. But it would, in all probability, have been something widely different from anything we of these later days can imagine. At all events such a creation was not to come into existence. From the moment when Milton descended into the arena of theologic conflict, there was for him an end of romance, and he would have turned with abhorrence from any theme unconnected with the solemn doctrines and deep questions of the prevailing system of theology. The gay and cheerful tone of the poetry of Horton no more reappears till it becomes necessary for aiding in the creation of the garden of Eden ; even his lightest effusions now breathe a solemn tone ; religion pervades every region of his mind.

As we have observed above, it is impossible now to ascertain when he first conceived the idea of making the Fall of Man the subject of a poem. Aubrey tells us that he commenced *Paradise Lost* in 1658 ; but he must have had the subject in contemplation long before that time. It is also uncertain whether he at first intended it to be an epic poem or a

tragedy. Phillips tells us it was to have been the latter; and he mentions some verses of the commencement of Satan's address to the sun in the fourth book of Paradise Lost, "which," he says, "several years before the poem was begun, were shown to him, and some others, as designed for the very beginning of this tragedy." This account, we think, may be correct in the main; for in the Cambridge MS. there are two plans of a tragedy, or mystery, on the Fall of Man, in the second and more perfect of which "Lucifer appears after his overthrow, bemoans himself, seeks revenge upon Man," and this, though not the "very beginning of this tragedy," is Lucifer's first appearance, and nothing could be more appropriate than that address to the sun. It is probable however that the poet changed his mind before he had made any progress in the drama, for if he had written any portion of the dialogue, it is likely that he would, in his usual manner, have preserved it.

Milton, in the commencement of his poem, says that his song will pursue

Things unattempted yet in prose or rime,

and when we consider his upright, honourable character, we may be certain that he would not have used such language if he were conscious of being under obligation to Grotius, and to numerous inferior poets of Italy and other countries, for much of his materials. No doubt he had read the *Adamus Exsul* of Grotius, and he *may* have read some of the other poems which the toiling industry of his critics has brought to light; but on looking to the passages which they adduce as those which he imitated, no one skilled in the philosophy of mind will discern anything beyond mere coincidence of thought or expression; very different from the appearance presented when he employs an image or expression which had remained in his mind from the perusal of Homer, Virgil, Spenser, or any other poet with whose works we know him to have been familiar. Like every great poet, he employed the language and imagery which his mind presented, without anxiously inquiring how they came there. Poets of the higher order are not very solicitous about the appearance of originality; Shakespeare, for example, often

merely versifies the chronicle or tale from which he derived his subject.

Voltaire was the first to bring a charge of plagiarism against the author of *Paradise Lost*. He says that he “saw at Florence a comedy called *Adamo*, written by one Andreini, a player, and dedicated to Mary de Medicis, Queen of France.” He adds, that “Milton pieced through the absurdity of that performance to the hidden majesty of the subject, which being altogether unfit for the stage, yet might be—for the genius of Milton, and his only—the foundation of an epic poem.” Joseph Warton and Hayley were both of opinion that Milton had read this drama, of which the latter gives an analysis at the end of his *Life of Milton*. We are of a totally different opinion, from the circumstance that there is not the slightest resemblance between its structure and economy and those of the dramas which Milton projected on the same subject; and surely if he did not follow it in a drama, he would not have done so in his heroic poem. In fact, we need only refer the reader to the extracts from the *Adamo* given by Hayley, and leave it to his own judgement to decide whether Milton was under obligation to that drama, or merely has some very slight coincidences with it.

At length, in the middle of the last century, appeared the notorious William Lauder, a Scot, with learning to some extent, but utterly devoid of principle. He published an *Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns*, the object of which was to show that Milton had borrowed largely from divers Scotch, Dutch, and German writers of Latin poems on subjects akin to the *Paradise Lost*; and to make good his charge, in the extracts which he gave, he did not scruple to interpolate verses of his own manufacture, or taken from Hogg's Latin translation of Milton's poem. Dr. Johnson, whose critical acumen was blunted by hostility to Milton, espoused the cause of Lauder warmly; but he afterwards renounced him, when Dr. (afterwards Bishop) Douglas, Lauder's own countryman, had exposed the fraud.

The industry of various critics and scholars has produced a

goodly list of poems, chiefly Italian, to which Milton *might* have been under obligation; for it seems to have been deemed necessary to deduct as much as possible from his originality. The most remarkable is the discovery of Mr. Sharon Turner, the historian of the Anglo-Saxons, that Milton may have derived much of his matter from the “venerable Cedmon’s” Paraphrase of Genesis. Of all hypotheses this is the most absurd. We have no certain evidence of Milton’s knowledge of Anglo-Saxon, and Cedmon’s Paraphrase was published by Junius for the first time in 1655, after Milton had been for some time totally blind, and consequently could only become acquainted with such books as his family and friends could read to him, and such was not likely to have been an Anglo-Saxon poem, which the editor himself did not perfectly understand.

Paradise Lost was first published in ten books, the same number as those of the epic of Portugal, *Os Lusiadas*. But he afterwards extended the number to twelve, corresponding with that of those of the *Aeneis*, by dividing the seventh and tenth books, and adding a few lines, to form the commencement of the new books.

The first edition of Paradise Lost is very correctly printed, and most carefully punctuated. As this last, as the editions of his Poems prove, was a matter to which Milton himself did not much attend, the praise of correctness must be due to the person who read the proofs. This, we presume, was his nephew, Edward Phillips, who, as we have seen, had a good deal of experience in these matters. A tolerably fixed system of orthography seems also to have been adopted; for in the *errata* we meet with “for *hundreds* r. *hunderds*, for *we* r. *wee*.” We invariably find *battel*, *cattel*; *taste*, etc. have always the final *e*, except in the second line of the poem. *Harald* and *sovran* (Italian forms) seem to be the poet’s own orthography. *Their* is always spelt *thir*; *star*, *war*, and *far*, *starr*, *warr*, *farr*. In *he*, *she*, *we*, *me*, when emphatic, the vowel is doubled.

PARADISE REGAINED.

WE have seen above* what was the origin of this poem. It may therefore have been composed in the summer and autumn while Milton was at Chalfont St. Giles; but as it contains little more than two thousand lines, and as the poet, according to the testimony of his widow, would pour forth twenty or thirty verses at a time, and so could easily have composed it in the space of three months, we need not depart from the theory of his vein flowing most freely between the autumnal and the vernal equinox, and may suppose it to have been composed during that period, either in Buckinghamshire or after his return to London.

Nothing would seem to be clearer than that he never thought of the subject till it was started by Elwood. All idea therefore of his having sought for materials in any not very accessible source—especially if he composed it in the country—would seem to be excluded; yet Mr. Todd, with that unhappy propensity which he had for making the great poet a kind of centoist, observing that Bale had published in 1538, “*A Brese Comedy or Enterlude concernyng the Temtacyon of our Lorde and Saver Jesus Christ by Sathan in the Desart,*” adds, that “Milton might have noticed this ancient drama.” Elsewhere he says, “perhaps the Italian Muse might afford a hint,” and he mentions an Italian poem named *La Humanità del Figliuolo di Dio*, in ten books, by Theofilo Folengo, printed at Venice in 1533, of which the fourth book treats of the Temptation, and from which he would seem to intimate Milton may

have derived the idea of making the angels spread a banquet for our Lord after his trials. He hints then at other obscure Italian poems, and at Ross's Latin Christiados, as sources from which Milton may have derived some of his ideas.

We certainly will not venture to assert that Milton might not one time or other have met with Bale's comedy, and read it; but the resemblances which Mr. Todd traces are very few indeed, and such as would only affect a critic of *his* calibre.

To Milton's logical mind, when brooding over the hint thrown out by Elwood, it must have appeared that as the cause of the loss of Paradise was the first Adam's succumbing under the temptation of Satan, the mode of its recovery must be the triumphant resistance to his arts and wiles by the second Adam. As therefore the only account of any temptation of our Lord by Satan is that in the wilderness after his baptism, in Milton's view the victory was then gained, the power of Satan was broken for ever, and all the subsequent deeds of our Lord were in order to secure his conquest and establish his empire. Whether this reasoning was correct or not, we leave to the decision of theologians. What is perhaps more decisive is, that from the words of our Lord to the penitent thief, "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," Milton must have inferred that it had been already regained.*

The model which Milton set before him for this poem was the Book of Job, that greatest production of the Semitic Muse. He regarded it as being a "brief model"† of the epic form of poetry, while in truth it is dramatic, and thus secretly recommended itself to Milton's mind, which, as we have seen, was highly dramatic also. The Paradise Regained consists therefore mainly of dialogue, of debates between our Lord and the Tempter; and the chief use of the narrative parts is to connect the dialogues, and to adorn the poem with the splendour and beauties of description. It is therefore absurd

* "For Te Deum has a smatch of Limbus Patrum; as if Christ had not 'opened the kingdom of heaven' before he had 'overcome the sharpness of death.'"—*Apology for Smectymnuus*.

† See above, page 352.

to compare this poem with *Paradise Lost*,—we might almost as well compare *Samson Agonistes* with it,—for it is clearly of quite a different kind; but in its kind as perfect as that great poem. It was, for example, the opinion of Wordsworth that “*Paradise Regained* was the most perfect in *execution* of anything written by Milton;”* and Coleridge also thus expressed himself on the same subject:—“Readers would not be disappointed in this latter poem, if they proceeded to a perusal of it with a proper preconception of the kind of interest intended to be excited in that admirable work. In its kind it is the most perfect poem extant, though its kind may be inferior in interest—being in its essence didactic—to that other sort in which instruction is conveyed more effectually, because less directly, in connection with stronger and more pleasurable emotions, and thereby in a closer affinity with action. But might we not as rationally object to an accomplished woman’s conversing, however agreeably, because it happened that we had received a keener pleasure from her singing to the harp?”†

We have quoted the opinions of these two critics because they were themselves poets of a high order, and their decisions are therefore entitled to the utmost attention. It thus appears plain why, as Phillips says, Milton, when it was accounted inferior to *Paradise Lost*, “could not bear with patience any such thing when related to him.” He knew well that it was as perfect, if not more so, in its kind, as that wonderful poem. In fact, blemishes have been found, and some with justice, in *Paradise Lost*, but none, to our knowledge, in *Paradise Regained*. Even Johnson bestows on it the meed of his unalloyed praise, and observes that “had it been written, not by Milton, but by some imitator, it would have claimed and received universal praise.”

It is a strange notion taken up by some critics that the versification of this poem is inferior to that of *Paradise Lost*. Jortin says, it has not the same “harmony of numbers;” Todd, that “it wants the variety and animation that so emi-

* Life, vol. ii. p. 311.

† Lectures on Shakspeare, etc., ii. 121.

nently distinguish the numbers of *Paradise Lost* ;” and Symmons speaks of its “general deficiency in the charm of numbers.” Probably it was style and language they meant when they spoke of numbers. The language is no doubt less figurative and less brilliant in general, but it is at the same time more fluent, less inverted, and somewhat less Latinized than that of the greater poem ; while when occasion offers—as in the description of the night-storm, of the banquet, of the Roman and Parthian empires—it rises fully to the level of its predecessor. As to the numbers or versification, they could not well be altered, unless Milton had chosen to go back to the broken verse of Peele and the elder poets ; the system, the *sweep*, the current, which distinguishes good blank verse, is there as fully as in any poem written by Milton or by any other poet.

It must however be confessed that *Paradise Regained* never enjoyed, and we may venture to add, probably never will enjoy, the same popularity as *Paradise Lost* ; and the reason is a very simple one. There are very few readers who can relish pure reasoning and calm well-sustained dialogue, as compared with those who are delighted by sublime or brilliant description, and by various, rapid, and animated action. *Paradise Regained* is less read than *Paradise Lost* for the same reason that the book of Job has not one reader for twenty readers of the *Apocalypse*. It may be placed among the works of our poet with *Lycidas* ; and that higher order of minds which enjoys the one will enjoy the other.

We would make one remark on this poem which shows the geographic ignorance of Milton’s time. The scene of the Temptation is evidently intended to be the great Arabian desert ; for Satan says :—

Others of some note,
As story tells, have trod this wilderness ;
The fugitive bond-woman with her son,
Outcast Nebaioth, yet found here relief
By a providing angel ; all the race
Of Israel here had famished had not God
Rained from heaven manna, and that prophet bold,

Native of Thebez, wandering here was fed
Twice by a voice, inviting him to eat.—ii. 306.

Now, to reach this desert from the banks of the Jordan, it would be necessary to take a journey of very many miles, and the shortest way, we believe, would be through the city of Jerusalem. But in the view of the narrators of the life of our Lord, it was not this desert that was the scene of the Temptation, but that of the 'Arabah, the valley of the Jordan, where John was baptizing,* which has at all times been a wilderness, and to which view tradition has been true in fixing on Mount Quarantania, which overhangs it, as that from the summit of which the Tempter showed our Lord all the kingdoms of the earth and their glory.

* See Mark i. 3.

MILTON AND DANTE.

PARADISE LOST AND LA DIVINA COMMEDIA.

SUBLIMITY and vigour being assumed as the justest criterions of high poetic genius, *Paradise Lost* constitutes Milton one of the triumvirate of greatest poets, after Shakespeare, who dwells alone in separate glory as the mightiest poetic mind that nature has ever produced. Taken in order of time, the triumvirate is composed of Æschylus, Dante, and Milton. Our omission of Homer may cause surprise; but much of the fame of Homer is merely traditional, and arose when he was regarded as the sole author of the poems that go under his name. It seems to be now established by just principles of criticism, that the *Ilias* and the *Odyssey* are the productions of different poets, and that the former is a composite and not an organic whole, of which possibly not more than one-half belongs to the poet whom we name Homer.* His claim therefore to be placed in the same class with Milton and Dante becomes somewhat dubious. But at the same time, every person of taste will gladly acknowledge his fire, his animation, his picturesqueness, his fine descriptive power, his skilful delineation of character, his correct expression of sentiment and feelings, his ease and perspicuity of narrative, in fine, his greatness as a poet, though still, we think, in some degree inferior to those above enumerated.

It is needless for us to impose on ourselves the task of analysing *Paradise Lost*, and displaying its perfections; for that has been the task of critics, from Addison down to Channing

* See our *Mythology of Greece and Italy*, page 494, 3rd edit.

and Macaulay. Neither will we fill our pages with quotations from their criticisms. One quotation however we will make, because it is one which must be inaccessible to most readers, and because it is the opinion of a man who was a true poet himself. We mean Esaias Tegnér, bishop of Vexiö, in Sweden, and author of the *Frithiofs Saga*, perhaps the most beautiful poem of the nineteenth century. In his panegyric on Count Oxenstjerna, when he comes to speak of that nobleman's translation of *Paradise Lost*, he thus expresses himself respecting the original author :—

Milton, with his sublime genius, is, in a certain point of view, the most irregular of all poets. For he not only departs from rules, but he casts them down with the strength of a giant, and builds up a new poetic world on their ruins. For this reason, his wonderful poem cannot be assigned a place in any of the departments which are usually regarded as the only possible ones for poetic creations. He takes at once into his great poetic ocean the whole of the four paradisal rivers of poetry, the epic, the lyric, the didactic, and the dramatic. It has therefore been justly observed, that the proper object of the poem is didactic, as the poet will, by means of it, "justify the ways of God to men." It is epic merely by the greatness of the action and the episodes respecting the war in heaven. But the action itself is dramatic, both in design and execution, and the main interest from beginning to end dwells about a single great tragic character, the fallen archangel. Finally, the poem is lyric, not only in single passages, but even in general, in its whole tone and expression. Thus then the *Paradise Lost*, in a poetic point of view, forms a species in itself, without a model, and as yet without a copy; but to think of rejecting it on this account would be to sacrifice the just rights of genius to the crotchetts of the schools. The power with which this wonderful poem seizes on every mind of a deeper and more serious cast, only proves the poverty of our ordinary poetic theories.

This brief criticism appears to us to be extremely just; for *Paradise Lost* does, in fact, contain all these kinds of poetry. If any form prevailed most in Milton's mind, we think it was the dramatic; that is, such as it appeared on the theatre at Athens; and had Milton flourished in ancient Greece, this is the species of poetry to which he would have devoted himself, equalling, as we have already said, *Aeschylus* in sublimity, and

surpassing him in amenity ; equalling Sophocles in amenity and dignity, and surpassing him in sublimity and vigour, and not inferior to him in skilful arrangement. From this turn of the poet's mind, *Paradise Lost* is the most dramatic of heroic poems ; for everything that it was possible to throw into speech and dialogue has been set forth under these forms ; *Paradise Regained* we need hardly say is almost entirely dramatic. Hence, too, it results that the characters in his great poem are accurately drawn and well preserved. Among his good angels the distinction is as great as was possible where all are equally good ; Michael is dignified, Raphael affable, Gabriel prudent and circumspect, Abdiel faithful and zealous. The evil angels, as varieties of evil, present stronger differences ; Moloch is impetuous and furious, Beelzebub deeply malignant but cool and prudent, Belial loose and lascivious, Mammon low-minded and grovelling. But his great creation is Satan, the "Archangel ruined," ambitious, proud, revengeful, yet not utterly devoid of pity and remorse ; to a certain extent the Æschylian Prometheus, but a Prometheus justly punished, as his sufferings result from guilt. Finally, his human personages are not presented clad in theologic virtues and graces, but such as imagination would fondly conceive the solitary dwellers of a blissful paradise to have been, with the innocence of children who have known no sin and seen no evil, joined with that degree of reason and knowledge which we must suppose suitable to personages of full growth of person and maturity of intellect.

Milton has also admitted personifications into his poem, a liberty exercised by poets of all ages and countries ; to *him* the appearance of Wisdom as a person in the proem to the Proverbs would have appeared a sufficient authority. He has Chaos and his *cortége* animating the vast region of anarchy through which Satan pursues his course in search of the new-made World, and as keepers of the gates of Hell he stations Sin and her offspring Death.

This allegory, by which Sin is the offspring of Satan, sprung from his head, and by him the mother of Death, is founded on

a passage in the epistle of St. James. Johnson pronounces it to be “undeniably faulty.” He allows that Sin may be the portress of hell, but says that when Death attempts to stop the journey of Satan, the allegory is broken; he also objects to their building a real bridge through Chaos. It is not unlikely, that Milton conceived the idea of placing Sin at the gate of hell, from the passage of Scripture, where it is said, “If thou doest not well, *sin lieth at the door*,” and the fallen angels certainly had not done well. As Death cannot be separated from Sin, he must be with her at the gate; and as it is his nature to destroy, he must prepare to exercise his office on any one who approaches. We are further to recollect, that casting into the lake of fire is called the *second death*, which may not have been without effect on the mind of the poet. Sin, from her very nature, is disposed to transgress the command she had received, and so she opens the gates of hell to let Satan forth on his errand of mischief. As for the building of the bridge, who can say positively, after considering what we have said and shall say of Milton’s idea of the reality of his cosmology, that he may not have conceived a material junction between hell and the exterior orb of the world? and the structure of it might legitimately be ascribed to Sin and Death, as it was Sin that first gave the evil spirits entrance into the world.

There is however one invention of Milton’s of which we cannot venture to undertake the defence. We mean the Paradise of Fools; “a fiction,” says Johnson, “not in itself ill-imagined, but too ludicrous for its place.” In fact, nothing can exceed its incongruity and its discordance with the whole scheme of the poem, in which everything seems intended to be real. Here, on the contrary, we have apparently St. Peter at heaven’s wicket with his keys, and friars, with “all their trumpery,” passing through the celestial spheres and arriving at the ascent to heaven, and such-like incongruities in abundance. The only solution we can offer is, that Milton’s imagination was early captivated by that ingenious fiction of Ariosto’s, in which he makes the moon to be the receptacle of all things

lost on earth, and that he could not resist the temptation to imitate it, and at the same time to express his contempt for the mummeries of the Church of Rome.

Johnson makes out an apparently strong case—at the time a really strong one—against Milton for his confounding of matter and spirit in his accounts of the actions of his good and evil angels. But all, or nearly all, his objections vanish now that we are aware of Milton's materialistic ideas. The representing Satan, however, who had been lurking in the body of a toad, as armed with shield and spear when he resumed his own form, seems to be an oversight of the poet's. We may observe, in favour of this view, that there are nearly two hundred lines intervening between his resumption of his own shape and the mention of his arms.

This critic also charges it as a fault on Milton that “Satan is with great expectation brought before Gabriel in Paradise, and is suffered to go away unmolested.” But a combat would have been unsuitable, and it was necessary that Satan should be at large; and as Milton represents his angels as neither infallible nor omniscient, there is some curiosity excited as to how he will again contrive to elude the vigilance of Gabriel. But probably the poet's chief reason for this early discovery of Satan in Paradise was to give occasion to the mission of Raphael in the following book, and his narrative of the rebellion and war in heaven.

And God the Father turns a school-divine
is an objection made by Pope. Now, we should like to know what other language, consistent with the theology of the time, could the poet have put into the mouth of the Deity, for the vindication of his ways, than that which we read. It is rather remarkable that in the commencement of the *Odysscy*, the ruler of Olympos is introduced vindicating his ways in a similar manner. Foreknowlege and free-will will be for ever a source of difficulty and incongruity to divines and philosophers, how much more to poets!

It is also objected to Milton, that he is fond of stringing together sonorous proper names. To this no doubt he was led

by his admiration for that practice in the ancient poets, and they certainly form a stumbling-block to the unlearned. But there are few, if any, who can completely understand Milton's heroic poetry without the aid of a comment, and we will venture to assert that when one has fixed in his memory the positions of the places named by the poet, and some of the political events connected with them, these very passages will ever after be among those which he will peruse with the greatest pleasure. We must repeat that *Paradise Lost* is one of those poems which must be studied carefully and with the aid of notes, to be fully understood and enjoyed.

The last objection which we will notice is, that it was not judicious in the poet to give a narrative of future events in the twelfth book, instead of continuing the splendid series of pictures contained in the eleventh book. We doubtless join in the regret that such should be the case, but we will not join in making a charge out of it against the poet. The truth is, that what we would desire is an impossibility. Let any one go over in his mind the long series of events contained in this book, and the account given in it of doctrines and opinions, and he will see what a fruitless attempt it would have been to present them in a succession of pictorial representations. At least, they would have required the space of several books, and would probably have wearied by their prolixity.

Paradise Lost is the last great heroic poem that the world has seen, perhaps the last that it will ever see. Putting Dante's poem aside for the present, we may assert that it is the only successful poem on a religious subject, and it may be doubted if religion supplies any other theme for poetry than that which Milton selected. He was fortunate, too, in flourishing at the time he did; for though he might have written it had he lived in the preceding century, he could hardly have done so in the subsequent one, and most certainly not in the nineteenth. We will justify this assertion.

An instinctive feeling seems to have led that true poet, Collins, to express himself as follows:—

In scenes like these, which, daring to depart
From sober truth, are still to nature true,

And call forth fresh delight to fancy's view,
The heroic Muse employed her Tasso's art.

* * * * *

Prevailing poet! whose undoubting mind
Believed the magic wonders which he sang.
Hence at each sound imagination glows,
Hence at each picture vivid life starts here,
Hence his warm lay with softest sweetness flows;
Melting it flows, pure, murmuring, strong, and clear,

And fills the impassioned heart, and wins the harmonious ear.*

His meaning evidently is, that the poet should, to a certain extent, put faith in the creations of his genius; that is, believe that his fictions might have been realities. Thus in Tasso's time, the belief in witchcraft and magic was so strong, that few could venture to deny the possibility of the enchantments of Armida and Ismeno; and the poet might therefore, in the ardour of composition, regard what he was inventing as reality.† In like manner the Homeric poets believed in the reality of Olympos and its inhabitants, while Virgil, we know, had no such faith, and in consequence the deities of the *Aeneis* are tame and insipid as compared with those of the older poets. Further, fully to enjoy the verses of the believing poet, the reader must, like Collins, be able to cast aside, for the time, his superior knowledge, and place himself in the degree of light enjoyed by the poet whose work he is perusing.

To apply this to Milton. In his time, as we shall presently see, the Ptolemaic astronomy was the prevalent one; and the trials for witchcraft, and condemnation of wretched old women by grave and learned judges, for having held personal intercourse with, and transferred their souls to, the Evil One, together with many other circumstances, prove the belief of the age in the actual existence of evil spirits.‡ We are moreover

* As Collins had just before named Fairfax's translation, it is doubtful whether it is of him or of Tasso that he speaks in these last lines. For our purpose however it does not matter which. By the way, those who would fully enjoy that poem should read it as an original poem, not as a translation.

† Tasso, in his insanity, actually believed himself to be persecuted by *Maghi*.

‡ The Invisible World of the pious and learned Bishop Hall, written in 1651, proves how deeply rooted the belief in evil spirits and their power and agency was in those times, so that even the strongest and most highly cultivated intellects were held in bondage by it.

to observe, that whenever Milton had lived, he would have possessed all the knowledge of his age.

Now, with the seventeenth century, at least in England, expired the astronomy of Ptolemy. Had Milton then lived after that century, he could not for a moment have believed in a solid, globous world, enclosing various revolving spheres, with the earth in the centre, and unlimited, unoccupied, undigested space beyond. His local heaven and local hell would then have become, if not impossibilities, fleeting and uncertain to a degree which would preclude all firm, undoubting faith in their existence ; for far as the most powerful telescopes can pierce into space, there is nothing found but a uniformity of stars after stars in endless succession, exalting infinitely our idea of the Deity and his attributes, but enfeebling in proportion that of any portion of space being his peculiar abode. Were Milton in possession of this knowledge, is it possible that he could have written the three first books of *Paradise Lost*? We are decidedly of opinion that he could not, for he never would have written that of the truth of which he could not have persuaded himself by any illusion of the imagination. It may be said that he would have adapted his fictions to the present state of astronomy. But he could not have done it ; such is the sublime simplicity of the true system of the universe, that it is quite unsuited to poetry, except in the most transient form.

In the eighteenth century, the absurd belief in witchcraft had abandoned every intelligent mind ; the theory of the gods of the Gentiles having been evil spirits had also been found to rest on no solid foundation ; the demonic possessions of the Gospels began to be regarded as the mere popular theories of the causes of lunacy, epilepsy, and other diseases, to which ideas our Lord and his apostles had adapted their language ; Dr. Farmer wrote an essay, which was much admired, to prove that the Temptation of our Lord was only in vision. Had Milton been imbued, as he would have been, with these ideas, the whole economy of his poem must have been disturbed and altered. But it would have been still more so, in fact its whole foundation would have been overturned, if fate had delayed him till the present century, when Archbishop Lawrence introduced

into literature the Book of Enoch, and when Coleridge could write as follows, without any imputation on his faith in Christ.

He did not reflect that all these difficulties are attached to a mere fiction, or, at the best, an allegory, supported by a few popular phrases and figures of speech used incidentally or dramatically by the Evangelists, and that the existence of a personal, intelligent, evil being, the counterpart and antagonist of God, is in direct contradiction to the most express declarations of Holy Writ. “Shall there be evil in a city and the Lord hath not done it?” Am. iii. 6. “I make peace and create evil.” Is. xlvi. 7. This is the deep mystery of the abyss of God.*

And again, he queries if the personality of the Devil be not “merely a Jewish dogma left undisturbed to fade away under the increasing light of the Gospel.”†

We have more than once observed that it is probable that Milton may have thought himself describing and narrating realities under the secret influence of the Holy Spirit; and if we would attain to the full enjoyment of his wonderful poem, we must, as far as possible, endeavour to produce in ourselves a similar frame of mind. We must also transfer ourselves back to the seventeenth century, give faith to the appearances and acts of evil spirits, view the earth as the centre of the universe, the heavenly bodies as revolving in solid spheres around it, and the planets as shedding their influences sweet or malign; we must even for a time suffer the gloom of Calvinism to cast its dark shade over our intellect. This however is a difficult operation; and few therefore will ever attain to the height of

* Lectures on Shakespeare, etc. ii. p. 135. It is an annotation on that part of Robinson Crusoe in which Defoe sets his hero to instruct Friday in religion. From the history which he gives of the Devil, Coleridge pleasantly supposes that Paradise Lost must have been bound up with one of Crusoe’s Bibles. Dr. Hitchcock, in his Religion of Geology (p. 78), makes the following just remarks: —“The great English poet, in his *Paradise Lost*, has clothed this hypothesis [of an entire change throughout all organic nature] in a most graphic and philosophic dress; and probably his descriptions have done more than the Bible to give it currency. Indeed, could the truth be known, I fancy that on many points of secondary importance the current theology of the day has been shaped quite as much by the ingenious machinery of *Paradiso Lost* as by the Scriptures; the theologians having so mixed up the ideas of Milton with those derived from inspiration, that they find it difficult to distinguish between them.”

† *Ibid.* p. 154.

the pleasure which *Paradise Lost* must have yielded to persons of taste and poetic feeling at the time of its first appearance.

In conclusion, we must also observe the advantage, in a poetic sense, which Milton derived from his Arianism ; for had he held his early opinions on the nature of the Son, and sought, as he would have done, to avoid Tritheism, he would have fallen into difficulties that he could hardly have surmounted. It may be asked, how his opinions on this subject, which seem now so plain, escaped observation so long, except by Warburton and a few other of the more quick-sighted critics. The reply perhaps is, that these are in reality the secret, unconscious views of Christians in general, who have not had leisure or ability to discern nice distinctions and weigh subtle reasonings. They therefore felt no surprise when they met with views and sentiments coinciding with the secret impressions on their own minds, and the more especially as they were always conveyed in the language of Scripture.

When Macaulay, the most brilliant of essayists, in the fervour of youth, with a mind filled with various knowledge and teeming with rich imagery, made Milton the subject of one of his earliest essays, he thought he discerned a resemblance between him and Dante, between *Paradise Lost* and the *Divina Commedia*. At a later period, the same opinion was expressed and the parallelism attempted to be traced by Mr. Hallam, when treating of *Paradise Lost*. The result of our own studies of these poets and their works has been different, and we will here endeavour to explain it.

“Milton,” says Mr. Macaulay, “was, like Dante, a statesman and a lover; and, like Dante, he had been unfortunate in ambition and in love.” Now, from what we have seen above, it is manifest that Milton was no Mejnún, that love never deranged his reason, that his affection for Mary Powell was no violent, absorbing passion, but a calm and tranquil feeling, which never even impelled him to the composition of verses, and did not prevent him from catching a glimpse of the young lady’s imperfections. In fine, we can only see in Milton’s love the proceeding of a virtuous man of domestic habits, who sought

for the enjoyment of connubial felicity, and deemed, but erroneously, that he would find it in a union with Mary Powell.

The wide-spread fame of Dante for his Beatrice is chiefly founded on his enigmatic piece named the *Vita Nuova*, which is regarded as a genuine and ingenuous narrative of his early blown and early blighted affection. Let us then cast a glance at this narrative, first premising that all we really know of the domestic history of Dante is, that he was married, and, we believe, at an early age, to a Florentine lady, named Gemma Donati, by whom he had several children, but on what terms or in what manner they lived is quite unknown.

The poet tells us that one day, toward the close of his *ninth* year, in what place he does not say, he chanced to behold “the glorious lady of his mind, who was called Beatrice by those who did not know how to call her.” She was then just entering her *ninth* year, and was habited in a *sanguine* or crimson dress. Three spirits within him then spoke Latin, and Love took entire possession of his soul. He used thenceforth to go constantly and endeavour to catch a sight of this angel. At the end of his *eighteenth* year it befell that he saw her in the street, dressed in *white*, and accompanied by two ladies older than herself, and she gave him a virtuous salute, the first time he ever heard the sound of her voice; and this, he observes, was at the *ninth* hour of the day precisely. He retired forthwith to his chamber, where he thought himself to sleep, in which he had a marvellous vision. A cloud of the colour of fire appeared in the chamber, in which he discerned a Lord of awful aspect, but who seemed quite joyful. He held in his arms a naked person, asleep and covered with a *sanguine* cloth, whom the slumbering poet recognized for the lady who had saluted him the day before, and in his hand something burning, which he said was the sleeper’s heart. He then awoke the lady, and made her, though rather unwillingly, eat the burning heart. Soon after, his joy was converted to weeping, and with the lady in his arms he ascended to heaven. Dante awoke then in great affliction, and setting himself to think, he found that it was the fourth hour, *i. e.* the first of the *nine* last hours

of the night, that the vision had appeared to him. As at this time he was skilled in poetry, he composed a sonnet narrating his vision, which he sent to the principal poets of the time, and in which he saluted all the Fedeli d'Amore, and besought them to interpret his vision. They complied with his request; and the answers of three are extant, namely Guido Cavalcanti, Cino da Pistoja, and Dante da Majana.

Here we may offer a remark. What can be more improbable than the whole of the preceding narrative? Is it at all likely that a lad of eighteen would venture to write to a man of the rank, the age, and the learning of Guido Cavalcanti, to consult him on his dream? and that he would reply with all seriousness? But among these renowned poets and lovers is Cino da Pistoja, who was born in 1270; and if, as is the general belief, Dante was born in 1265, Cino could only have been thirteen years of age when he was thus celebrated. Making every allowance for southern precocity, this is hardly credible.

Some time after this event, the father of Beatrice died; and not long after, that angel herself departed, to the grief of her lover. This took place, he informs us, on the first hour of the *ninth* day of the month, "in that year of our indiction, that is, of the years of our Lord, in which the perfect number was completed *nine* times in that century in which she was placed in the world;" *i. e.* in 1281, nine being what, as the square of three, etc., was regarded as the perfect number. He tells us that this number was friendly to her, to show that all the *nine* movable heavens had conspired to generate her, and that she was herself by similitude the number *nine*, the root of which is nothing else but the adorable Trinity. The whole city was widowed and despoiled of all dignity, as it were, by her departure, on which occasion Dante wrote a Latin letter to the Princes of the Earth, commencing with the *Quomodo sedet sola civitas!* of the prophet Jeremiah.

Beatrice, as we see, died in 1281, and as the poet was born in 1265, he could not be more than sixteen at the time; yet he has just told us that he was eighteen when she first saluted him. This the advocates for the reality of his love en-

deavour to evade, by asserting without any, and contrary to all, evidence, that *ten* is the perfect number. But again, the letter of which he speaks, and which is still extant, was written in 1314, and addressed to the Italian cardinals,—to whom the Pope had given the title of *Principes Terræ*,—to induce them to try to bring the Papacy back to Rome from Avignon, whither it had lately been removed.

Boccaccio, in his curious and enigmatic Life of Dante, tells us that Beatrice was the daughter of Folco Portinari, one of the principal citizens of Florence; and by his will, dated January 15, 1287, still extant, Folco leaves a legacy to his daughter Beatrice, the wife of Simon de' Bardi; so that it appears that all this excess of passion was for the wife of another man, and we have a pendant to the tale of Petrarcha and Laura. As we have seen, Dante was probably himself married at the time; and our firm belief is, that he never had any passion for Beatrice Portinari, either single or married, and that the Beatrice of his poetry, like the Mandetta or Giovanna of Guido Cavalcanti, the Selvaggia of Cino da Pistoja, the Laura of Petrarcha, the Fiammetta of Boccaccio, and so many other ladies, generally first met in Passion Week, and who all died before their lovers, was a pure *Donna di Mente*, a personification of the poet's mind and its leading idea, the longed-for reform in Church and State.

Having thus viewed the two poets as lovers, we should now consider them as statesmen. But we do not think that this term applies accurately to Milton. He was never engaged actively in politics; he merely wrote some political treatises, and his only business as Secretary of the Council seems to have been to put into good Latin matters of which a draught was probably given him in English. With Dante all was different. Even from the scanty notices we possess of his life, we may learn that he was an ardent partisan in politics; he had borne arms for and against his native city, had had a share in her government, had been condemned by her, innocent and unheard, to exile and confiscation of his property, and had been on embassies to various courts and states.

We have only to look at the portraits of the two poets, the one by Giotto, the other by Faithorn, to see the difference of their characters. Of the former, Mr. Macaulay observes, with his usual felicity, “No person can look on the features, noble even to ruggedness, the dark furrows of the cheek, the haggard and woful stare of the eye, the sullen and contemptuous curve of the lip, and doubt that they belong to a man too proud and too sensitive to be happy.” In the portrait of Milton, taken when he was six years older than the age at which Dante died, we discern seriousness, rendered probably more severe by his want of vision, but the calmness and dignity resulting from inward peace of mind, as of one whose thoughts were habitually ‘nigh sphered in heaven.’ Nothing therefore can be more unlike than the aspects of these two illustrious poets. The same difference we discern in their poetic characters. In vigour they are alike; in perception of beauty, whether in the moral or the natural world, we cannot pronounce either to be inferior; yet perhaps the Terrestrial Paradise is richer and more varied in natural charms in the Paradise Lost than in the Purgatorio. In sublimity we give the palm to the English, in tenderness and pathos to the Tuscan, poet; we do not think that Dante could have written the two first books of Paradise Lost, we feel almost certain that Milton could not have narrated the sad tale of Francesca da Rimini, or the horrid fate of Count Ugolino, as they are narrated in the Inferno. As strong feeling of one kind is usually united with strong feelings of other kinds, so in Dante there is an intensity and bitterness of satire of which the calmer nature and more pious spirit of Milton was incapable. In vividness of representation and graphic power we must award the prize to Dante. His life was one of wandering, he had traversed the plain, the vale and the mountain, he had probably dwelt in the cot as well as the palace, and hence his similes and descriptions, being actual transcripts from nature, present the objects themselves to our senses. Milton, as we have already observed, saw life and nature chiefly through the medium of books, and hence we rarely meet in him with that accuracy of

observation which distinguishes Dante. We would liken Milton to Raphael and those artists who, taking their sketches from nature, give reins to imagination and produce pieces beyond what actual nature presents; while Dante may be in general compared with those who are called Preraphaelites, who copy nature faithfully and accurately, but rarely venture to go beyond her. In fact, he usually presents to us as a simile, the very object that he has copied. Milton also was quite devoid of, and Dante possessed in the highest degree, that power by which Swift makes us almost believe in the existence of Lilliput and Brobdingnag, when by seriousness of tone and manner, minuteness and circumstantiality of narrative, and apparent anxiety for accuracy, the writer would fain persuade us of the actual truth of what he is telling us.* In learning, Milton, of course, as born at a later period, and after the invention of printing, had the superiority. We also think that he may have possessed more dramatic power and talent than the Italian poet, whose country has never signalized itself in the higher departments of the drama.

We come now to the poems, and here also we fail to recognize much similarity. In *Paradise Lost*, the poet, as we have seen, related what he regarded as real events, and even his descriptions of places ‘beyond this visible diurnal sphere’ had in his conception a certain degree of reality. The *Commedia*, on the contrary,—the true reason of its bearing that title is probably all its personages being *masked*,—is confessedly allegoric, with a secret meaning in every line and almost in every word. How then can we compare them? Milton’s Heaven and Hell are real material places lying out in the vast regions of space; the *Inferno* and *Paradiso* of Dante, though real too, but in a different sense, are, as will appear, on this earth, and even in Italy. In structure and design the poems also are quite unlike. We may compare *Paradise Lost* to a magnificent temple of the Doric order, rich in material, simple in design, intended to last for ages, inspiring each successive generation with sentiments of piety and veneration;

* This did not escape Mr. Macaulay.

while the Commedia—which has, we think, been erroneously compared to a vast pile of Gothic architecture, for there is in it nothing merely ornamental, every part, however minute, having its use and application—may best be likened, having the Inferno chiefly in view, to a maze or labyrinth, involved in circles and bewildered with partitions, in which the stranger is almost certain to lose his way till he is furnished with a ground-plan, when, to his surprise, he finds that all is regular and formed on a determined plan. The structure too was designed by its author to answer only a temporary purpose; and had the event which it was intended to produce early taken place, it would have been left to sink into oblivion, if not preserved by its poetic merits.

In the time of Dante, as we learn from his own writings and those of Petrarea and Boccaccio, it was an established dogma, that poetry and other works of imagination had, and should have, beside the literal sense, one or more secret senses. Of these senses Dante enumerates four,—the literal, the allegoric, the moral, and the anagogic.* He gives as an example the psalm, *In exitu Israel de Aegypto*, etc., where he says the allegoric sense is, our redemption through Christ; the moral, the conversion of the soul from the grief and misery of sin to a state of grace; the anagogic, the passage of a holy soul from the servitude of this corruption to the liberty of eternal glory. This notion probably had its origin in the Midrashes or allegoric interpretations of the Rabbis, which were adopted and imitated by the Fathers, and hence the typology, etc. of Scripture. Of all the classic poets, Virgil was the one in whom this principle was supposed to prevail most; every line of the Bucolics and *Aeneis* was regarded as pregnant with secret meaning. Over and over again Petrarea declares such to be his belief.

Dante in his letter to Can Grande della Scala tells him that

* *Litera gesta refert, quid credas Allegoria,
Moralis quid agas, quid spes Anagogia.*

We know not who composed these verses. The second and third senses, it should be observed, are often the same.

the secret “ subject of his poem is man, in as far as, by merit or demerit, after the freedom of his will, he is obnoxious to the rewards or penalties of Justice ;” on which an old commentator observes : “ So that from these words you may infer that, according to the allegoric sense, the poet treats of that Hell in which, travelling as wayfarers, we are capable of merit or demerit,” *i. e.* that the Hell, and consequently the Purgatory and the Paradise, of the poem, are on this earth and in this life. Dante himself tells us repeatedly that there is a deep and secret sense in his verses. On one occasion he cries out :—

O voi che avete gl’ intelletti sani,
Mirate la dottrina, che s’ asconde
Sotto il velame delli versi strani.

Now, as religion is plainly the second or allegoric sense, and the moral sense is too plain and obvious to be the subject of such anxious concealment and mystery, the natural inquiry is, what is the anagogic or most important sense ? This, we think, is clearly told in the inscription on the poet’s tomb at Ravenna, said to have been composed by himself :—

*Jura Monarchie, Superos, Phlegetonta, Lacusque
Lustrando, cecini, voluerunt Fata quoque, etc.*

That is to say, that the object of the poem was political,—namely, the diffusion of Ghibellinism, the cause of the Emperor, in opposition to Guelfism, or that of the Papacy. The God of the poem is the Emperor, the vicegerent of the Deity on earth ; his adversary the Pope is therefore Lucifer. Hell is the world, or rather Italy, under the one ; Paradise is the same under its rightful sovereign. The Inferno is, in this view, the most terrific satire ever written, and deeply therefore did it concern the poet to veil its secret and real sense so closely that it should only be known to the initiated.

From what precedes, the reader will perceive that we have embraced the theory of Rossetti on this subject. We confess the fact, and are ready to take our share of the scoffs and sneers of ignorance, prejudice, and malevolence ; for in all

that has been written against Rossetti, we have discerned nothing else.* It is now nearly a quarter of a century since we first became acquainted with his theory, by reading the *Spirito Antipapale*. Before we had gone through a hundred pages of that work, we saw clearly that that theory was the truth. We have since read this and his other writings† over and over again; we have studied and meditated on the works of Dante, Petrarcha, and others, and our conviction has become stronger and stronger each day; and if we possess any character for sense and judgement, we are willing to stake it on the issue of this question. We will at the same time boldly assert that we feel ourselves to be as capable of forming an opinion on it as any of Rossetti's critics. The day, we are confident, will come when the work left incomplete by Rossetti, for want of encouragement, will be taken up and perfected; not in England certainly,—for the English mind is most alien from such studies,‡—nor do we think in Italy, or even in France, but in Germany, where the theories started elsewhere, as in the case of Beaufort and Astruc, are carried out to their utmost limits. The literature of the Middle Ages, now so enigmatic, will then become clear, and the secret doctrine which pervades it be developed and explained.

* See two articles in those extinct Reviews, the Foreign and the British and Foreign, evidently by the same hand, and the poor and feeble article by A. W. Schlegel in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*. The French writers Ozanam and Delécluze have treated Rossetti with respect and courtesy.

† These are the *Comento* on the *Inferno*, the *Spirito Antipapale*, the *Amor Platonico*, and the *Beatrice*, of which only the First Part was published. Rossetti entrusted the MS. for translation to a Frenchman named Aroux, who, instead of translating it, has written a work of his own from Rossetti's works, hardly noticing his authority.

‡ The allegories of the *Faery Queen* have never been fully explained. It is now a century since Upton's edition was published, and nothing has been done since; for Todd's is, like his *Milton*, mere compilation. Upton's edition is not to be had, and half a century has not exhausted a single impression of Todd's. Much remains to be done by a sagacious editor. We may also notice the slow sale of our own *Mythology of Greece and Italy*, as a proof of this turn of the English mind. Even the *Fairy Mythology* is generally regarded as a collection of absurd or amusing stories, rather than as what it is— a part of the philosophy of fiction.

As a test of the correctness of Rossetti's views, we would challenge his opponents to prove that the lion, the wolf, and the panther which the poet sees in the first canto of the Inferno, do not denote France, Rome, and Florence; that the exclamation of Plutus at the beginning of the seventh canto is not

Pap' è Satan, Pap' è Satan Aleppe;*

that the Città di Dite and what is related of it do not mean Florence and the approach to it of the Emperor Henry VII.; that it is not the same city and the embassy of the Cardinal di Prato that is the subject of the broad, contemptuous, and biting satire of the twenty-first and following canto; and, finally, that the deep well which occupies the middle of the Inferno, with its floor of ice and Lucifer in the centre of it, do not represent Rome and Guelfic Papacy. We will develope this last a little.

When Dante and Virgil, his guide, have been carried down by the demon of fraud, the triple Geryon, *i.e.* the Papacy, into the inclined plain named Malebolge, where in ten concentric hollow circles the fraudulent are punished, the poet—giving one of his usual hints—compares those whom he sees moving in the first circle to the pilgrims passing the bridge of St. Angelo at Rome, at the time of the Jubilee. He also compares these circles and the bridges that cross them, to the fosses surrounding a fortress: the ninth of them, he says, is twenty-two, and the tenth eleven miles, in circuit; as they approach the central well he sees towers, as it were, all round it, and he asks what town it is they are approaching. When he comes nearer he finds that these supposed towers are giants, and he compares the head of the first of them that he discerns, to the ball of St. Peter's at Rome. He is let down into the well by one of these giants, and there he beholds in the centre

* The discovery was made by a young lady with whom Rossetti was reading Dante, and the same thing happened in two instances to ourselves. The explanation is: these ladies, being unacquainted with Latin, were not misled by *papæ!* and as they had been told that Dante's Satan was the Pope, they easily discerned the true meaning of the word.

Lucifer with three faces, red, black, and yellow, and with a traitor in each mouth.

Now the circuit of the walls of Rome is about eleven miles, and in the time of Dante there was, or was supposed to be, a fosse twenty-two miles in compass at some distance from the walls. Dante's whole poem is founded on Scripture, especially the writings of St. John, and in the Apocalypse, Satan, the beast, and the false prophet are combined, and unclean spirits come out of their mouths. Moreover the Whore of Babylon—a usual term at the time for the Papacy—is represented as seated upon many waters, represented here as frozen by the chilling blasts from the wings of Lucifer, to denote the evil effects of the influence of Guelfic-Papism.

The reader who reflects seriously on these coincidences will probably hesitate before he absolutely rejects the new theory. We could multiply proofs, were not this a kind of digression, and our work devoted to another subject. We will only add, that the Purgatory is the opposite of the Hell, and teaches how to escape from its evils; that the grand scene in the terrestrial Paradise, and the descent of Beatrice, represents the condition of the Church down to the fourteenth century; and that—let not the reader start—the Paradise is “the grandiose image of a Masonic Lodge.”

The tenable* portions of Rossetti's theory seem to us to be as follows. The Manicheans, who derived their origin from Persia, used a language of double sense, regarding their own system as the religion of the Spirit or of Love. They settled in Italy and the South of France, and, gradually changing many of their tenets, became the sect known under the names of Albigenses, Paterini, etc., so hostile to the Papacy, and so anxious for a reform in the Church. The Troubadours were mostly of this reformed religion; and their love-verses, which appear so forced and unnatural to critics, were in general of a mystic nature, the mistress whom they celebrated being

* We use this term because, in our opinion, many of his positions are utterly untenable; his imagination often led him astray, and thus laid him open to the scoffs and sneers of uncandid critics.

the Reformation, or pure religion, after which they languished.*

At the close of the twelfth century, this style of poetry was transferred to Italy, and was adopted by the Ghibellines, who made it political as well as religious, seeking a reform in politics also, and the establishment of the Imperial power in Italy. All the Italian poetry of the thirteenth century is of this kind; but at the beginning of the next century, as the clergy had discovered the true nature of this pretended love, Dante gave it a new form, and invested his *Commedia* in the garb of religion. A return to love was however made by Petrarcha and Boccaccio.

These various sects and parties were, in the opinion of Rossetti, a secret society, with signs, a conventional language, etc. From comparing the ritual books of the Free Masons with Dante's poem and other works, and finding a marvellous similarity, he infers that these last are only a continuation of the former, all descended from the original Manicheism. He also sees in the various works on alchemy and astrology of the Middle Ages, only different forms of the same doctrine.† Our space does not permit us to trace the subject any further; but we again require the reader to believe that we could not be convinced if there were not *some* weight in the evidence, and not to reject without careful examination.‡

* It is very remarkable that the Súfies of Persia, the country of Manes, take a similar view of the poetry of Háfez, and the other Persian poets the contemporaries of the Troubadours. We first discovered and directed Rossetti's attention to this coincidence. Of the Italian Cantori d'Amore Ginguené says, "Ils sont *tous* occupés du même sujet, qui est l'Amour, et l'on pourrait, en quelque sorte, les croire *tous amoureux du même objet*." This is exactly what Rossetti says.

† Rossetti terms Swedenborg the Dante of the eighteenth century, regarding his works as Masonic; and certainly, with the key which he gives, the interpretation of them is easy.

‡ E quel che più ti graverà le spalle
Sarà la compagnia malvagia o scempia,
Colla qual tu cadrài in questa valle,
Chè tutta ingrata, tutta matta ed empia
Si farà contra te.—Par. xvii. v. 61.

Rossetti's most inveterate, most envenomed opponent, both in conversation

Rossetti was not merely a most sagacious critic, he was a man of true genius; in our opinion, the greatest lyric poet, perhaps the greatest general poet, that Italy has produced since Torquato Tasso. He was even an Improvisatore, as we can testify of our own knowledge; and in his Veggente in Solitudine will be found one of his improvisations in Malta, taken down in short-hand. He was also a man of the purest virtue, and every region of his mind was pervaded by the spirit of true religion, as appears in all his writings, especially his last work, *L'Arpa Evangelica*, a collection of sacred poems, the production of his declining years.* His mind was rather too sensitive, and he let the silly and ignorant or malignant attacks made on him give too much disturbance to his equanimity: he also suffered from infirmities and a partial loss of sight; but he attained a good old age, and he enjoyed what rarely falls to the lot of an exile—that greatest of blessings, domestic felicity.† To ourselves it is a matter of grateful recollection, that we were so happy as to enjoy for many years the friendship and intimacy of a man of such eminent genius, and we feel a melancholy pleasure in thus paying even this slight tribute to his memory;—

*Purpureos spargam flores, animamque beati
His saltem accumulem donis, et fungar inani
Munere amicitiae.*

and in writing, was one of his “fellows in exile”! When we call to mind the genius, the virtues, the patriotism of Rossetti, and the uniform courtesy and urbanity of his language, we confess we wonder how his compatriot could, as he did, and in the coarsest terms, charge him with imposture, with ignorance of the poem he was commenting on and of the history of those times—and all without a shadow of proof; mere reckless and confident assertion, which Rossetti amply confuted. But, ‘Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?’

* He also published *Versi* and *Il Tempo ovvero Dio e l’Uomo*, Salterio.

† Shortly after his arrival in England he married the daughter of his friend Polidori, a woman possessed of every mental, moral, and personal advantage, the best of wives and best of mothers. With her he passed seven-and-twenty years of uninterrupted harmony; he lived to see his children attain to maturity, all possessed of superior talent, dutiful and affectionate to their parents and attached to each other.

ERRORS IN PARADISE LOST.

MILTON undoubtedly had a strong memory, like every other man of genius; but he does not seem to have possessed one of that extreme fidelity which at times is given to inferior men. This, combined with his loss of sight, caused him occasionally to fall into errors; venial ones no doubt, but still such as should be noted. Such are the following.

As when to them who sail
Beyond the Cape of Hope, and now are past
Mozambique, off at sea *north-east* winds blow
Sabean odours from the spicy shore
Of Araby the Blest.—iv. 159.

What is here asserted is an impossibility. Any one who will look on a map of the world will see that when a vessel going to India has passed Mozambique, the coast of Arabia is due north to her, and at an immense distance, with a portion of the east coast of Africa interposed. In no case then, and in no part, could those who had sailed by the Cape of Hope and Mozambique meet with Sabean odours wafted by north-east winds. Milton's blindness amply excuses this mistake; but surely his commentators who had their sight might have looked at a map and so have discerned the error.

To the same cause may be assigned the error in the following passage:—

Or pilot from amidst the Cyclades,
Delos, or *Samos*, first appearing, kens
A cloudy spot.—v. 264.

Samos is not one of the Cyclades.

We cannot offer the same excuse for the following error, which we can only ascribe to the *incuria* which comes at times even on the most vigilant.

Meanwhile, in utmost longitude where heaven
With earth and ocean meets, the setting sun
Slowly descended, and with right aspect
Against the *eastern* gate of Paradise
Leveled his evening rays.—iv. 539.

Here no critic seems ever to have asked himself the question, how the sun who was sinking in the *west* could level his rays directly against the *eastern* gate of Paradise? It might be said, that it was against the inner side of the gate, and that the rays came over Paradise; but this is contrary to all analogy; for no one but Satan entered the garden except at the gate, and Uriel came on one of these beams. Besides, it is refuted by the following passage:—

And Uriel to his charge
Returned on that bright beam, whose point now raised,
Bore him slope downwards, to the sun now fallen
Beneath the Azores.—iv. 589.

When describing the Serpent, Milton says,—

Never since of serpent-kind
Lovelier, not those that in Illyria changed
Hermione and Cadmus.—ix. 504.

No ancient writer whatever names the wife of Cadmus *Hermione*, always *Harmonia*. The two names were evidently confounded in Milton's mind; and as Ovid does not mention the name, and he was perhaps no great reader of Apollodorus, and did not recollect the passage in the Rhodian poet in which the true name occurs, he fell into this error. It did not of course escape Bentley, but not one of the subsequent critics notices it.

The following are mere slips of memory:—

Or when Ulysses on the larboard shunned
Charybdis, and by the other *whirlpool* steered.—ii. 1019.

Sylla is nowhere called a whirlpool. But perhaps what

Ovid tells of her being changed by Circe when bathing, was running in his mind ; *see* ii. 660.

Nor that Niseian isle
Girt with the river Triton, where old Cham,
Whom Gentiles Ammon call and Libyan Jove,
Hid Amalthea and her florid son,
Young Bacchus, from his step-dame Rhea's eyes.—iv. 275.

In the narrative of Diodorus Siculus, whom Milton here follows, they are not *hidden*.

When Charlemain with all his peerage *fell*
By Fontarabbia.—i. 586.

Charlemain was not among the fallen on that fatal day ; but it had probably been many years since Milton had read the *Morgante Maggiore*.

As when the potent rod
Of Amram's son, in Egypt's evil day,
Waved round the coast, called up a pitchy cloud
Of locusts *warping* on the eastern wind.—i. 338.

Warping is a technical term, and Milton appears to have misunderstood it. A ship is warped to get her out of port, when there is no wind, or it is contrary. It is performed thus : —an anchor, with a cable attached, is carried out ahead in a boat to some distance from the ship and there cast ; the ship then, by means of the capstan, is brought up to that place ; the anchor is then raised and carried out as before, and so on, till the vessel is got out sufficiently. Now this will not apply by any means to the progress of the swarm of locusts, whose motion seems rather to answer to what he afterwards (xi. 840) calls *hulling*, undulating with the wind.

In the first edition, the text stood thus :—

In Gibeah, when the hospitable *doors*
Exposed their *matrons*, to prevent worse rape.—i. 504.

And though this might pass as a poetic license, yet in the second he gave it as it stands in the text at present.

Milton's errors are sometimes only apparently so. For instance :—

So rose the Danite strong,
Herculean Samson, from the *harlot* lap
Of Philistine Dalila.

And in Samson Agonistes he terms her *unchaste*, without the warrant of Scripture. But when we recollect the sense which Milton puts on the Hebrew verb, *play the whore*,* we shall see that he terms her a harlot and unchaste on account of her treacherous violation of her marriage vow.

We long thought there might be an error in—

As in an organ from one blast of wind
To many a row of pipes the *sound-board breathes*.—i. 708;

but on applying to an eminent and scientific musician,† we got the following explanation:—

“The wind produced by the bellows is driven into a reservoir called *the wind-chest*, above which is placed the sound-board, and thence by intricate contrivance conveyed to each ‘row of pipes.’ When a stop is drawn, the supply of wind is prepared for every pipe in it, and it is admitted when the organist presses the key he wishes to speak. Therefore the ‘sound-board breathes,’ or sends the breath into ‘many a row of pipes,’ and Milton’s description is correct; as, when speaking of music, it always is. There is a passage about fugue-playing (xi. 561), every word of which is pregnant with meaning to a musician, but to him only in its full extent. All other poets, except Milton and Shakespeare, constantly blunder when they use musical terms; they never do.”

The following lines contain an apparent error, which has perplexed the critics:—

Their sumptuous gluttonies and gorgeous feasts
On citron tables or *Atlantic stone*.—*Par. Reg.* iv. 114;

for the Romans did not use marble dining-tables. But it is probably the floor of the *triclinium*, which was often formed of Numidian marble (*giallo antico*), that the poet had in view;

* See above, page 185.

† Professor Taylor. See above, page 313.

and it is not at all unlikely that *or* may be a misprint for *and*, a very common printer's error, as we know by experience.*

We may not regard it as an error, but notice it as a peculiarity in Milton, that when a theory or an interpretation was not, as appeared to him, certain, he would give the different views at different times. Thus, though he generally follows the Ptolemaic astronomy, as most accordant with the literal sense of Scripture, he yet occasionally hints that the Copernican might be the truth. Of this we have an instance in the angel's discourse with Adam, in the beginning of the eighth book ; and when describing the return of Uriel to the sun, "now fallen beneath the Azores," he adds—

Whether the prime orb,
Incredible how swift, had thither rolled
Diurnal, or this less volatile earth
By shorter flight to the east had left him there,
Arraying with reflected purple and gold
The clouds that on his western throne attend.—iv. 592.

Of the passage in Genesis, "the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair, and took them wives of all that they chose," there were three interpretations, and Milton gives the three in different parts of his poems.

To the opinion of the Fathers, that the sons of God were the good angels, he alludes in this place :—

If ever, then,
Then had the sons of God excuse to have been
Enamoured at that sight.—v. 446.

The second, that they were the descendants of Seth, he gives thus :—

To these, that sober race of men, whose lives
Religious titled them the sons of God,
Shall yield up all their virtue.—xi. 621.

* Or make the peaceable *or* quiet Nile
Doubted of Cæsar.—*Beaum. and Fletch. : The False One*, i. 2.

Here the note of Mr. Dyce, the most cautious of critics, is "Query *and*?" No doubt it is the right word. In *Samson Agonistes*, v. 1692, Milton probably dictated *nor*, not *and*, as there is an opposition intended.

and he notices the third, that they were evil angels, in this place of *Paradise Regained* :—

Before the Flood, thou, with thy lusty crew,
False titled sons of God, roaming the earth,
Cast wanton eyes on the daughters of men,
And coupled with them.—ii. 178.

THE LANGUAGE.

WHEN we pass from Comus and the earlier productions of Milton's muse to *Paradise Lost*, we become aware of a considerable change: while the rules of grammar and logic seem to be better observed,* there is less simplicity and less genuine Anglicism. The cause was probably his addiction in the interval to controversial prose-writing, in which, while he found it necessary to attend more closely to his reasoning, he may have deemed it of importance to seek to give dignity and force to his writings by the employment of Latinisms and involution; his experience in teaching also may not have been without influence. In *Paradise Regained* he seems to have made a return toward his earlier and simpler style.

Of his Latinisms we may note the following.

Words of Latin origin, which in English are used in their tralatitious or moral sense, will frequently be found employed in *Paradise Lost* in their original physical sense; adjectives also are used as substantives.

* See above, p. 285.

But let my due *feet* never fail
To walk the studious cloisters pale,
And *lore* the high embowed roof,
With antic pillars massy-proof,
And storied windows richly dight.—*H. Pens.* 155.

Here, in strict grammar, *feet* is the noun to *lore*, and the roof is *dight* with pillars and windows; while he means *let me love*, and it is the *cloister* that is *dight*. It may no doubt be said that *dight* belongs to *windows*, but in that case *with* should be *and*.

Ay me! while thee the *shores* and sounding seas
Wash far away.—*Lycidas*, 154:

here the shores wash. Such slips do not occur in his later poetry.

It was a practice of the Latin poets to use the simple for the compound verb, and in this Milton has often followed them. There are however instances, but much more rare, of the same practice in Shakespeare, Spenser, Fairfax, and other poets.*

No wonder, fallen (*from*) such a pernicious highth.—i. 282.

For who can think (*of*) submission?—ib. x. 661.

Expatiate (*on*) and confer (*about*)
Their state-affairs.—ib. 774.

Thus trampled (*on*), thus expelled.—ii. 195.

Ere he arrive (*at*)
The happy isle.—ib. 409.

From them I go (*on*)
This uncouth errand.—ib. 826.

The rest shall hear me call and oft be warned (*of*)
Their sinful state.—iii. 185.

The trepidation talked (*of*).—ib. 483.

To wait (*for*) them with his keys.—ib. 485.

Vernal delight and joy, able to drive (*away*)
All sadness but despair.—iv. 155.

These others wheel (*to*) the north.—ib. 783

And rising on stiff' pennons tower (*to*)
The mid aerial sky.—vii. 411.

Not as man
Whom they triumphed (*over*) once lapsed.—x. 571.
Ejected, emptied, gazed (*at*), unpitied, shunned.—P. R. i. 414.

There is a figure of rhetoric much used by the Latin poets, named zeugma, by which a verb is omitted, as being as it were included in another verb. Of this perhaps there are some examples in Paradise Lost, as:—

She to him as oft engaged
To be returned by noon amid the bower,
And (*to have*) all things in best order.—ix. 400.

By his side,
As in a glistening zodiae, *hung* the sword,
Satan's dire dread, and in his hand (*was*, or *he held*) the spear.—xi. 247.

* We have observed ten instances in Shakespeare; six in Spenser; five in Fairfax; four in Drayton; nearly fifty in Paradise Lost and Regained.

Milton at times preferred the authority of the Scriptures and Homer to that of Virgil and his more artificial school, and had no hesitation to repeat the same word in the same line or same sentence. A very remarkable instance is vii. 359–365, where, in the space of seven lines, the word *light* occurs not less than four times.

But the most remarkable peculiarity of Paradise Lost, from which his preceding poetry is perfectly free, and one to which the critics have agreed to show no mercy, is the frequent plays upon words, which are held to disfigure it. We will not attempt to excuse or defend them, for they are not by any means objects of our admiration; but we will endeavour to account for them. They are then no proof of Milton's bad taste, but spring from the same source as so many of his other errors—his thralldom to the letter of Scripture, and his consequent persuasion that anything found there was, as being the dictation of the Spirit, right, and deserving of imitation. As examples, we need only to remind the reader of the well-known “beseeching or besieging,” “brought into the world a world of woe,” etc.

In that very part of Scripture on which Milton founded his poem, we meet with the following instance of the Paronomasia, as writers on rhetoric designate this mode of playing upon words. “And they were both naked (*arūmmim*, עֲרָמִים) . . . and the serpent was subtle (*arūm*, עָרֹם).” Again, in the same book (xxix. 10), “And he watered (*yashey*, יְשַׁׁהֵי) the flock . . . and kissed (*yishay*, יְשַׁׁיֵּה) Rachel.” So also (Judges xv. 16), “And Samson said, With the jawbone of an ass (*ha-khamór*, הַקָּמֹר), heaps upon heaps (*khamór khamórathayim*, קָמֹר קָמֹרָתָיִם).” Many other instances will be found in other parts of Scripture, especially in the Prophets, more particularly in Isaiah, for whom Milton's admiration was most profound; something of the same kind may also be discerned in the Epistles of St. Paul.

Another practice of Milton's may have had its origin also in his veneration for the language of Scripture. It is well known that the genitive *its* was not used in poetry or the higher prose till after the middle of the seventeenth cen-

tury;* *his* being the genitive of both *he* and *it*, as may be seen in the Bible and Milton. Now in upwards of thirty places of his poems Milton has *her*.† The far greater part of these, no doubt, such as *earth*, *region*, *valley*, *Paradise*, are feminine in Latin; but there are others, such as *heaven*, *hell*, *deep*, *firmament*, which are neuter. As then some words, such as *animal*, which are neuter in Latin, are feminine in Hebrew, in which language also the adjectival form, which is neuter in Latin, is feminine, this circumstance *may*—for we would not assert it—have operated on the mind of the poet.

A peculiarity of Milton's poetic language, arising evidently from the fineness and delicacy of his musical ear, was his avoidance of the unpleasant sound of *sh* in the Hebrew proper names. With all his veneration for the Hebrew Scriptures, he, on this point, preferred to follow the LXX and the Vulgate. Thus, instead of Beersheba, we have Beersaba; for Heshbon, Hesebon; for Bashan, Basan; and so forth. He also has Sirocco for the Italian Scirocco. In fact, the only names in which he has retained the *sh* sound are Joshua, Goshen, and Ashtaroth. He seems to have adopted this principle long before the era of Paradise Lost, for in one of his early prose works we meet with “Abimelech and the *Sechemites*.”‡

Milton, it is evident, had no dislike to the aspirate; yet for some reason unknown to us, he has given Oreb, Auran, and Ades, instead of Horeb, Hauran, and Hades.

* Shakespeare uses *its*.—Winter Tale, i. 2; Henry VIII. i. 1. Milton has it once, Hymn on Nat. st. x.

† Both Spenser and Fairfax use *her* occasionally, mostly with Latin feminines; at times with neuters, as *heart*.

‡ We need hardly observe that the *sh* sound is frequently avoided in the dramatists by adding a syllable, as it were, as ‘condition.’ But this was the original mode of pronouncing *ei* and *ti* in all words of this form derived from the Latin and French, as we may see in Chaucer.

THE VERSE.

THE verse of Paradise Lost—we might indeed say, our blank verse in general—does not seem to be as yet generally understood. It is really painful to read Johnson's essay on the subject, and to see him signalizing some of the most melodious lines of the poem as wanting in the very quality which most distinguishes them. But Johnson had no ear whatever for the variety of poetic melody, he could only discern and enjoy mechanic forms; the heroic verse, in which the accent falls regularly on every alternate syllable, he regarded as perfect, what varied from that standard as faulty, imperfect, and inharmonious. In fact, he reminds one of the decision of the ass, in the Italian poet's ingenious apologue, when chosen to decide whether the palm for musical skill should be given to the nightingale or the cuckoo. "It may be, Madam Nightingale," said the donkey to the former, "that your song has more trills and turns in it than that of the cuckoo, but the cuckoo's has more method."

Modern blank verse seems to be indebted for its origin to the Italians. The Provençal poets made frequent use of a line of five feet, sometimes with, but more usually without, a hypermetric syllable, but always riming, and always, like the French measure derived from it, with the cæsura at the end of the second foot. They had probably derived it from the Latin hendecasyllables, with which, when not read metrically, it pretty accurately corresponds: *ex. gr.*—

Lugéte Vénérès Cupidinésque.

The Italians, as is well known, derived their poetic forms in

general from the Troubadours, and the hendecasyllabic, or five-foot line, became the sole measure of their sonnets and the staple of their Canzoni, and also their heroic measure in the Terza Rima of Dante and the Ottava Rima of Boeaccio. But it is a fact not generally observed, that Dante's contemporary, Barberini, employed the five-foot line, both rimed and unrimed, in his poems named Documenti d' Amore and Reggimento delle Donne :* *ex. gr.*—

Questa Giustizia, da tal Sir mandata,
È senza prova di falli insegnata.
Nè vien misericordia con lei
S' el con rigor va giudicando i rei.
Or incomincia dir ciò ch' ella face ;
Fa—poi non giova—ben eiaseun che tacec, etc.

Da sicurtà a tutta gente Amore,
E fa portar li fériti e li morti
Davanti a lui, e dice sovra loro
Queste parole che qui sono scritte, etc.

In these poems of Barberini, the caesura almost always occurs at the end of the second foot, though not with the strict regularity of the Provençal and French measures, while in the sonnets and other forms this is not the case.

The riming couplet never found favour in the eyes of the Italian poets; but early in the sixteenth century the blank verse, under the name of Versi Sciolti, was adopted for the nascent tragic drama, and was used by Ruccellai in his didactic poem L'Api, and by Trissino in his epic L'Italia liberata da' Goti, but with the varied caesura then general in Italian poetry. At the same time, in Spain, Boscan, in imitation of the Italian poets, translated Hero and Leander from the Greek in this measure.† With the exception of the drama,

* See the passages quoted by Rossetti in his *Spirito Antipapale*, p. 289.

† Milton, in his notice of *The Verse* prefixed to his *Paradise Lost*, says, "Not without cause, therefore, some both Italian and Spanish poets of prime note have rejected rime both in longer and shorter works; as have also long since our best English tragedies." He of course alludes to (beside those mentioned in the text) La Coltivazione of Alamanni, Le Sette Giornate of T. Tasso, and the Aminta, Pastor Fido, etc. As we know not what his Spanish reading was,

and of some pieces by Chiabrera, the Versi Sciolti ceased, we believe, to form a part of Italian poetry till the end of the last century, when they were employed by Parini and others. About the same time they were adopted and became a favourite form in the revived poetry of Portugal and Brazil. Perhaps in both cases it arose from the admiration of the poetry of Milton, Young, and Thomson.

The English language borrowed its poetic measures from the French and Provençal. It first adopted the four-foot and six-foot measures ; but as the Anglo-Saxon verse, like that of the whole Teutonic family, had been regulated by alliteration and accent, not by quantity or number of syllables, the English poets would not submit to the restraint of having the same exact number of syllables in a line, but regulating their verse by accent alone, admitted feet of one or of three syllables into their lines.* The five-foot measure was introduced by Chaucer ; and as he used the same freedom of caesura as the Italian poets, we think it more likely that he adopted it from them, with whose poetry he was so familiar, than from the poets of France or of Provence.

The earliest specimen of blank verse in English is the translation of the second and fourth books of the *Aeneis* by the accomplished Earl of Surrey, who fell a victim to the ruthless tyranny of Henry VIII. in 1547. As he was so well versed in Italian literature, it seems more probable that he adopted it from Ruccellai and others, than that he formed it from the five-foot riming measures of his own language. As

we cannot be certain whether he was acquainted with Boscan's poem or not, or with the *short* pieces of Garcilaso de la Vega, Figueroa, and others ; but it is highly probable that he may have read Jauregui's beautiful translation of the *Aminta*, which was printed at Rome in 1607, and which he may have purchased when he was in Italy. He would seem not to have known, or rather not to have recollectcd, Lord Surrey's verses, of which we're about to speak.

* It was the same with the old poetry of Germany. In the *Nibelungen Lied*, feet of one and of three syllables are of frequent occurrence. It may be here observed, that the measure of this poem occurs in English in the Coke's Tale of Gamelyn, and other poems of the same kind, and in Spanish in the old poem of the *Cid*.

a first attempt it naturally has defects, yet in many places it exhibits the true form of blank verse. We take the following examples at random :—

I waked. Therewith to the house-top I clamb,
 And hearkening stood I. Like as when the flame
 Lights in the corn, by drift of boisterous wind,
 Or the swift stream, that driveth from the hill,
 Roots up the fields, and presseth the ripe corn
 And ploughèd land, and overwhelms the groves :
 The silly herdman all astonniéd stands,
 From the high rock while he doth hear the sound.

As wrestling winds out of dispersed whirl
 Befight themselves, the west with southern blast
 And gladsome east, proud of Aurora's horse ;
 The woods do whiz, and foamy Nereüs,
 Raging in fury, with three-forkèd maeæ
 From bottom's depth doth welter up the seas.

Surrey's verse is in general decasyllabic ; he does not often admit an anapaest or employ a hypermetric line ; and he very rarely has a hypermetric syllable after the cæsura.

Some short pieces by Grimoald, Gascoigne, and Vallens were written in blank verse in the sixteenth century ; but this measure found no favour, as the vehicle of narrative, till it was employed by Milton. On the other hand, its ease and freedom recommended it to the drama, and so early as the first years of Elizabeth it appeared in the *Gordebuc of Norton and Sackville*.* It was not however till the later years of her reign that it was brought into general use by Marlow, Green, Peele, and others. But it had not yet been able to emancipate itself completely from the couplet-form, and hence we constantly find rimes intermingled with it. We give the following lines from Peele's *David and Betsabé* as an example of the dramatic verse of that period :—

See, Cusay, see the flower of Israel,
 The fairest daughter that obeys the king,
 In all the land the Lord subdued to me ;
 Fairer than Isaac's lover at the well,

* The lines in this play are strictly decasyllabic.

Brighter than inside bark of new-hewn cedar,
 Sweeter than flames of fine perfumèd myrrh,
 And comelier than the silver clouds that dance
 On Zephyr's wings before the king of heaven.

Here the lines, taken separately, are beautiful, but they do not run into each other and form a system ; there is a stop at the end of each, and they resemble couplets deprived of their rimes. This kind of blank verse may also be seen in the earlier plays of Shakespeare himself ; but he and his fellow-dramatists gradually arrived at the *sweep* of blank verse,—which however is to be found in Marlow,—and in the beginning of the seventeenth century, dramatic verse had attained to perfection. In this state we may see it employed by Milton in his Comus, and even in his Samson Agonistes, and, with such modifications as we shall notice, in his epic poems.

This dramatic verse is five-footed, not decasyllabic, for it admits anapæsts, and also hypermetric syllables, both after the cæsura and at the end of the line.* The first foot of the line, and also the first of its second part, may be a trochee. All these characteristics may be discerned in Milton's Comus, as well as in Shakespeare and the other dramatists.

The varieties which Milton introduced into the structure

* The anapæst occurs so frequently in our old poets, that editors might give up using the unsightly synecopes and elisions of the old printers. The Greek iambic verse also admitted this foot and the tribrach, and, like our own drama, more frequently in comedy than in tragedy; it occurs ten times in Aristophanes for one in the tragedians. So it abounds in our Beaumont and Fletcher, in whom there are lines that contain but one iamb. With the aid of it, all the verse in these poets that is printed as prose, might easily be brought back to its true form.

Perhaps it would be better, instead of using the term 'hypermetric syllable,' to regard it and the preceding iamb as forming the foot named Bacchius (—'—), used so often by Plautus, though hardly ever by the Greeks. We will here note some curious coincidences.

Plautus has tetrameter Bacchiae, as—

Tergéri, aut | ornári, | políri, ex | políri.

Now this is the very measure of the Spanish Versos de Arte Mayor :—

Jamás la | tu fama, | jamás la | tu glória
 Darán en | los siglos | eterna | memoria.—*Juan de Mena* :

of his epic verse are, 1. A peculiar kind of anapæst ; 2. The making the two first feet of the line trochees, and in one case even anapaests ; 3. Doing the same after the cæsura. To these we may add that, 4, he retained the use of the hypermetric syllable after the cæsura. Of all these varieties we will now give examples.

If it be asked, where did Milton find these peculiarities, or were they devices of his own? we reply, that he derived them from the poets of modern Italy. Thus, as to the anapaests, nothing is more erroneous than to term the Italian heroic verse hendecasyllabic;* for it frequently is in reality of fourteen or more syllables. Italian diphthongs are such only nominally ; for each vowel is pronounced distinctly, and the two do not form one sound, as in Greek and some other languages.† In like manner, when two vowels meet, it is only in some cases that there is an elision. Thus, in the following verse of Petrarcha—

L'oro, e le pérle, e i fior vermigli, e i bianchi.—*Rime* i. son. 31;

there are—as even the punctuation shows—actually eighteen syllables ; for the vowels in *fior* and in *bianchi* are pronounced distinctly. But the verse is of five feet, as we may observe

and we might say that this was adopted from Plautus. But the measure of the Sháh-námeh and the narrative poetry of Persia is :—

— —' —, — —' —, — —' —, — —'

which is the Arabie measure Mútakarib, to be found in the Korán, so that probably both Persians and Spaniards got it from the Arabs.

But this is also one of the measures of the modern Welsh poetry :—

Iach bárthau | dwyreinfyd! | cartrélla | henáisiaeth,

Y tiroedd | arddérchog | fu'n rhóddi | magw'raeth.—*Blodan Glyn Dŷf*.

Our theory is that the Welsh poets thought to imitate the English anapaests ; but the genius of their language, which places the accent on the penult., forced the Bacchius on them.

* If any one doubts the existence of anapaests in Italian heroic verse, let him read the following lines of Ariosto :—

Pedóni e cávaliéri, e venía in campo

Là dóve Cárlo Marsilio áttendea.—*Ort. Fur.* ii. 37;

for the accents cannot be altered in *venía* and *Marsilio*.

† In Latin *regione* is counted as of four, in Italian as of three, syllables ; yet an Italian will pronounce them exactly alike. In their poetry however, diphthongs, as *io* in *regione*, *glorioso*, etc., frequently count as two syllables.

just that number of *ictus*, or strong accents, in it. In another verse of the same poet :—

Lassando ógni sua impresa ; e piágne, e tróma.—*Rime* i. son. 90, 10, we may observe that there are seventeen syllables, and besides a peculiarity of Italian verse, which Milton did not venture to imitate, namely, that the first foot is an iamb, and the second a trochee. As almost every line of the five-foot poetry of Italy thus contains more than eleven syllables, it is needless for us to give any further examples. The following will serve to show how Milton followed the Italian poets :—

- That were an ignominy and shame beneath.—i. 115.
- Though all our glory extinct and happy state.—ib. 141.
- Of glory obscured. As when the sun new-risen.—ib. 594.
- Exile, or ignominy, or bonds, or pain.—ii. 207.
- Inclines here to continue, and build up here.—ib. 313.
- So he with difficulty and labour hard.—ib. 1021.
- Two only, who yet by sovran gift possess.—ib. 366.
- High matter thou enjoinest me, O prime of men.—v. 563.
- For we have also our evening and our morn.—ib. 628.
- Us happy, and without love no happiness.—viii. 621.
- Or dairy, each rural sight, each rural sound.—ix. 451.
- Before thee ; and not repenting this obtain.—x. 75.
- Justice with mercy, as may illustrate most.—ib. 78.
- Of high collateral glory ; him Thrones and Powers.—ib. 86.
- Wherfore didst thou beget me ? I sought it not.—ib. 762.
- Not this rock only. His omnipresence fills.—xi. 336.

Many of these, no doubt, can come under the head of the hypermetric syllable after the cæsura ; but we may observe that they are all followed by vowels.

2. Commencing the line, after the manner of the Provençal poets, with two trochees, has been a favourite practice of the Italian poets from the earliest times to the present day. We may see it in the very first lines of the *Gerusalemme Liberata* :*—

Cánto l'ármi pietóse, e 'l capitán.

S' ármò d'A'sia e di Líbia il popol misto.

Nón circóndi la frónte in Elíconia.

* The first three feet of these lines, it will be seen, correspond with the two first feet of the classic choriambic. See above, page 317, *note*.

Háí di stélle immortálí aurea corona.
 E' che'l véro condító ín molli versi
 I' piú schívi allettánto ha persuaso.
 Cósì all' égro fanciúl porgiamo aspersi
 Dí soáve licór gl' orli del vaso
 Súcchi amári ingannató intanto ei beve,
 E dall' inganno suo vita riceve.

In this last passage, every line but the last we may see commences with two trochees, and the fourth of them contains only two iambs, in which last practice Milton also imitates his Italian prototypes.*

- Héll born nót to conténd with spirits of heaven.—ii. 687.
- A'nd corpóreal to íneorporeal turn.—v. 413.
- Spiríts ódorous bréathes, flowers and their fruits.—ib. 482.
- I'n their tríple degréées, regions to which.—ib. 750.
- Througħ the ínfinite hóst, nor less for that.—ib. 874.
- Univérsal repróach, far worse to bear.—vi. 34.
- O'ver fi'sh of the séa, and fowl of the air.—vii. 533.
- Tó the gárden of blíss, thy seat prepared.—viii. 299.
- Swéetness ínto my heárt, unselt before.—ib. 475.
- I'n the swéat of thy face shalt thou eat bread.—x. 205.
- Mé, me ónly, just óbject of his ire.—ib. 936.
- B'y the wáters of lífe, where'er they sat.—xi. 79.
- I'n the vísons of Gód. It was a hill.—ib. 377.
- A'mong dáughters of mén the fairest found.—*Par. Reg.* ii. 154.
- A'fter fórty days' fásting had remained.—ib. 243.
- Fróm that plácid aspéct and meek regard.—iii. 217.
- I'n the bósom of blíss and light of light.—iv. 597.
- Thát invíncible Sámson, far renowned.—*Sam. Agon.* 341.
- Fór his péople of óld ; what hinders now ?—ib. 1533.
- O' Jehóval our Lórd, how wondrous great.—*Ps.* viii. 1.

It will be observed that here, as in the Italian poetry, the cæsura falls at the end of the third foot, and that four of these verses (v. 482, 750 ; x. 205 ; xi. 377) contain only two iambic feet.

* The only instances we have met with out of Milton, are—

Nímphès, Faúnès and A'madriades.—*Chauc.* C. T. 2930.

I'n thesé fláttering streams, and makes our faces.—*Macbeth*, iii. 2.

The following line in Comus (v. 336) must, we think, be read in this manner,—

O'r, if yoúr influénce be quite dammed up ;
 for the context shows that the emphasis must be laid on *your*.

As an example of an Italian verse commencing with an anapaest, we may give the following from Tasso, in which however the foot is rather a choriambus:—

Fea i múti campi e quel silenzio amico.—*Ger. Lib.* vi. 103.

Milton has the following:—

With impétuous recoil and jarring sound.—ii. 880.
 And Tirésias and Phineus, prophets old.—iii. 36.*
 Shoots invisible virtue even to the deep.—*ib.* 586.
 No ingráteful food. And food alike those pure.—v. 407.
 And the hábitations of the just; to him.—vii. 186.
 Herculéan Samson, from the harlot-lap.—ix. 1060.
 Whom thus ánswered the arch-fi'end now undisguised.

Par. Reg. i. 357.

3. In Dante and Petrarcha, but very rarely in the later poets, we meet with two trochees after the cæsura.† Such however was Milton's esteem for those poets, that even in this he follows them.

Per mé si vá nell' etérno dolóre.—*Inf.* iii. 2.
 A'nche di quà nuóva schiéra s' adúna.—*ib.* 120.
 E più non dísse, é rimáse turbáto.—*Purg.* iii. 45.
 E poi al partir són più lévi che tigre.
 E 'l mar senz' onda, é per l'A'lpe ogni pésee.
 Prima ch' io trovi in ciò páce nè trérgua.

Petr. parte i. son. 37.

Milton offers the following examples of this structure‡:—

When will and reason—réason álso is choíee.—iii. 108.
 Burned after them tó the bóttonless pít.—vi. 866.

* “He [Wordsworth] talked of Milton, and observed, how he sometimes indulged himself, in the *Paradise Lost*, in lines which, if not in time, you could hardly call verse, instanceing ‘And Tiresias,’ etc.; and then noticed the sweet flowing lines which followed, and with regard to which he had no doubt the unmusical line before had been inserted.”—*Life of Wordsworth*, ii. 311. Now that line ends a sentence, and Wordsworth's error arose from his ignorance of the poet's pronunciation. *He* sounded Tiresias in the ordinary English way, *Tiresias*; Milton, who abhorred *sh*, in the classic manner, *Tiresiás*, in four syllables, and so the line is perfectly harmonious.

† They are frequent however in the comic blank verse: see the comedies of Ariosto and Maffei's *Le Ceremonie*.

‡ The same occurs in Chaucer, if we may trust the printed text.

Created thee, in the image of Gód.—vii. 427.
 And dust shalt eat all the dásys of thy life.—x. 178.
 With them from bliss to the bóttonless pít.—*Par. Reg.* i. 361.
 And made him bow to the góds of his wíves.—ii. 171.
 Cast wanton eyes on the daúghters of móén.—*ib.* 180.
 Not difficult if thou hearken to mé.—*ib.* 428.
 The Pontic king, and in tríumph had róde.—iii. 36.
 Light from above, fróm the foúntain of light.—iv. 289.

4. Like the dramatists, Milton frequently has a hypermetric syllable at the cæsura, or even at the semicaesura.

On Lémnos, the Aégeán* isle. Thus they relate.—i. 746.†
 Befóre thy féllows, ambítioús to wín.—vi. 160.
 With their bright luminaries, that set and rose.—vii. 385.
 Thy condescension, and shall be honoured ever.—viii. 649.
 Who sées thee? and whát is one? who should be seen.—ix. 546.
 That cruél sérpent. On mé exércise nót.—x. 927.
 Seemed their petition, than when that ancient pair.—xi. 10.
 For in those days might only shall be admired,—*ib.* 689.

We have observed above, that the heroic measure does not admit monosyllabic feet. A good reader will however in such instances as the following—where there is a stop after the first monosyllable of the line—give that word the time of a foot, and read the next foot as an anapæst.

Tears, such as angels weep, burst forth; at last.—i. 620.
 Rose, like an exhalation, with the sound.—*ib.* 711.
 What! when we fled amain, pursued and struck.—ii. 165.
 Pure; and commands to some, leaves free to all.—iv. 747.
 Plagues. They astonished all resistance lost.—vi. 838.

So also when the cæsura falls in the middle of a foot, the

* It is thus that this word is spelt in the correct first edition, as if to obviate the wrong pronunciation usually given to it—*A'gæan*; and this and x. 584 are the only places in the poem where the Greek *ai* is expressed by *æ*, its representative everywhere else being *e* accented; as *Pygméan*, *Léthéan*, *Orphéan*, *Sabéan*, etc. Hence then we would read,—

With wide Cerberéan mouths full loud, and rung.—ii. 655.
 Herculéan Samson from the harlot-lap.—ix. 1060.
 The sun as from Thyestéan banquet turned.—x. 688.

† Being suitors, || should the duchess | deny to match her.—*Beaum. and Fletch.: Women Pleased*, i. 1.

first syllable goes to the preceding iamb, and forms a bacchius, while the second makes a monosyllabic foot.

With loss of Eden, till one greater man.—i. 4.

Of Oreb, or of Sinai, didst inspire.—ib. 7.

Rose out of Chaos. Or if Sion hill.—ib. 10.

The same principle applies to four-foot and six-foot verse, and to that of all languages in which it is regulated by accent, with the single exception of the poetry of France.

It thus appears that Milton had the authority of the great Italian poets for the irregularities which Johnson lays to his charge; and surely the ear of a Johnson was not as susceptible of the varied melody of verse as that of a Petrarcha or a Tasso. In fact, we are persuaded that a great poet could not write an inharmonious line; and that where such occurs, as in Shakespeare,—the author of *Venus and Adonis* writing such!—we may be certain that there is an error of the copyist or of the printer.* But then much depends on the reader; and as no one to whom nature has not given a musical ear, can ever read poetry as it should be read, few things are more rare than an accomplished reader. Most persons, however great their taste may be, read poetry in what is termed a chanting or singsong manner;† and, consequently, when the melody is various, as in Milton, much of it is lost, both to the reader himself and to the auditors. We are, in fine, thoroughly convinced that, if properly read, there is not a single inharmonious verse in the entire works of this noble poet.

* We can never believe that Milton did not dictate

On him who had *stolen* Jove's authentic fire.—iv. 719;

but the printer substituted *stole*, and it escaped the reader. So also in *Comus* (c. 195), the edition of 1637 and the Cambridge MS. have *stolne*, which is changed to *stole* in the edition of 1645, without any reason, and of course by the printer. The participle *stole* was little used; we recollect but two instances of it in Shakespeare.

† See above, page 298.

COSMOLOGY.

MILTON, like Dante, had to create the scene of his poem ; but from the objective turn of his mind, and his persuasion of being aided by the Holy Spirit in the composition of it, it is highly probable that he believed the creations of his imagination to be almost identical with the actual condition of the Universe, and that he was describing the real Heaven, Hell, and Chaos. Hence, while the Paradise of Dante, as being only a figurative representation of things on earth, is vague and indistinct, the Heaven of Milton is as clear and definite as any description of a region on the surface of the globe.

In the view of Milton, space was infinite. A portion of it, of immense but limited extent, was occupied by Heaven, the abode of the Deity and his Angels ; the rest, under the name of Chaos, formed

a dark
Illimitable ocean, without bound,
Without dimension, where length, breadth and hight
And time and place are lost.—ii. 891.

Elsewhere it is termed a

vast, immeasurable abyss,
Outrageous as a sea, dark, wasteful, wild,
Up from the bottom turned by furious winds
And surging waves, as mountains, to assault
Heaven's hight and with the center mix the pole.—vii. 211.

The contents of Chaos are the “embryon atoms,” which by their combinations may produce all material substances ; which were used afterwards in the formation of Hell and the

World ; and which are and will be in ceaseless conflict among themselves,

Unless the almighty Maker them ordain
His dark materials to create new worlds.—ii. 915.

The poet seems, like the followers of Democritus and Epicurus, to have regarded these atoms as being without origin and external.*

In the view of the poet, Heaven, as the fixed abode of the Deity, must have been coeternal with Chaos. Its extent was great, but not boundless ; its form was apparently circular, for when Satan approached it in his fatal voyage from Hell through Chaos, it is said to have

extended wide
In circuit, undetermined square or round.—ii. 1047 ;

which apparently indicates a circle† of such vast dimensions that the curvature of the portion which the eye of even a superior being could take in was imperceptible. As a further means of giving an idea of its enormous magnitude, the poet adds, that as compared with it, the World which hung from it was

in bigness as a star
Of smallest magnitude close by the moon.—ii. 1051.

Around the circumference of Heaven ran a “crystal wall” (vi. 860),

With opal-towers and battlements adorned
Of living saphir.—ii. 1049.

In this wall were “blazing portals” (vii. 575), and

. . . ever-during gates, harmonious sound
On golden hinges moving.—vii. 206.

Within the wall Heaven spread into plains, rose into hills, subsided into vales, and

* See above, p. 174.

† Yet he elsewhere speaks of it positively as a square :—

And henceforth monarchy with thee divide
Of all things, parted by the empyreal bounds,
His quadrature, from thy *orbicular* world.—x. 379.

the River of Bliss through midst of Heaven
Rolls o'er Elysian flowers her amber-stream.—iii. 358 ;

while “immortal Amaran” there

. . . flowers aloft, shading the Fount of Life.

The trees of Heaven produce nectar and manna, “angels’ food.” “Though,” says the Angel to Adam,

Though in Heaven the Trees
Of Life ambrosial fruitage bear, and vines
Yield nectar; though from off the boughs each morn
We brush mellifluous dews, and find the ground
Covered with pearly grain.—v. 426.

Beneath the surface of the soil lay rocks and various minerals, as on earth (vi. 472 *seq.*) ; for as the Angel elsewhere says,

Though what if Earth
Be but the shadow of Heaven, and things therein
Each to other like, more than on Earth is thought!—v. 574.

Like Earth, too, Heaven had its succession of day and night :—

Evening now approached—
For we have also our evening and our morn ;
We ours for change delectable not need.—v. 627.

Now when ambrosial night, with clouds exhaled
From that high mount of God whence light and shade
Spring both, the face of highest Heaven had changed
To grateful twilight—for night comes not there
In darker veil—and roseate dews disposed
All but the unsleeping eyes of God to rest.—v. 642.

All night the dreadless angel unpursued
Through Heaven’s wide champaign held his way till Morn,
Waked by the circling Hours, with rosy hand
Unbarred the gates of light. There is a cave
Within the Mount of God, fast by his throne,
Where light and darkness in perpetual round
Lodge and dislodge by turns, which makes through Heaven
Grateful vicissitude, like day and night :
Light issues forth, and at the other door
Obsequious darkness enters, till her hour
To veil the Heaven, though darkness there might well
Seem twilight here. And now went forth the Morn,
Such as in highest Heaven, arrayed in gold

Empyreal ; from before her vanished Night,
Shot through with orient beams.—vi. 1.

The poet does not mention the mode or the exact time of the formation of Hell. In the battle of the angels, Michael (vi. 276) would seem to speak of it as in existence at that time, and when God is sending the Son to drive them out of Heaven, he speaks of them as being

To their *prepared ill mansion* driven down.—vi. 738.

And it is added :—

Hell at last
Yawning received them whole and on them closed ;
Hell, their fit habitation, fraught with fire
Unquenchable, the house of woe and pain.—vi. 874.

The exact situation of Hell of course could not be assigned. It lay in some part of Chaos,*

As far removed from God and light of Heaven
As from the centre thrice to the utmost pole.—i. 73 ;

that is, three semidiameters of the World. The rebel angels first appear in it, weltering in a lake of liquid fire, while

A dungeon horrible, on all sides round,
As one great furnace flamed.—i. 61.

Thence extended “dry land,” which burned

With solid, as the lake with liquid, fire.

This land, like the soil of Heaven and Earth, contained within it mineral riches, whence Mammon constructs

Pandæmonium, the high capital
Of Satan and his peers.—i. 756.

When the fallen angels proceeded to explore this land,—

* This idea occurs in Milton's earlier writings : “To banish for ever into a local hell, whether in the air or in the centre, or in that uttermost and bottomless gulf of Chaos, deeper from holy bliss than the world's diameter multiplied.” —*Doctrine of Divorce*, b. ii. ch. 4. The idea of Hell being in the centre occurs also in Paradise Lost :—

In heaven or earth or *under earth in hell*.—iii. 321.

This however was probably only a slip of his memory. See above, p. 209.

Through many a dark and dreary vale
 They passed, and many a region dolorous,
 O'er many a frozen, many a fiery Alp,
 Rocks, caves, lakes, fens, bogs, dens, and shades of death :
 A universe of death, which God by curse
 Created evil, for evil only good,
 Where all life dies, death lives and nature breeds
 Perverse all monstrous, all prodigious things,
 Abominable, unutterable, and worse
 Than fables yet have feigned or fear conceived.—ii. 418.

Through this region ran the four infernal rivers, Styx, Acheron, Cocytus, Phlegethon, while that of Lethe separated it from a “frozen continent,”*

. . . . dark and wild, beat with perpetual storms
 Of whirlwind and dire hail.—ii. 588.

The vault of Hell is terminated by a portal,

And thrice threefold the gates ; three folds were brass,
 Three iron, three of adamantine rock
 Impenetrable, impaled with circling fire,
 Yet unconsumed.—ii. 645.

After the expulsion of the rebel angels, the Son of God,

on the wings of Cherubim
 Uplifted, in paternal glory rode
 Far into Chaos and the world unborn.—vii. 218 ;

and there setting the “golden compasses” of God, he marked out the circumference of the World, which then came into existence under the influence of the Spirit of God. It was a “firm opacious globe,” *i.e.* a hollow sphere, of which we shall presently describe the interior, restricting ourselves here to the outer surface.

When Satan lighted on it in coming out of Chaos,

A globe far off
 It seemed, now seems a boundless continent,
 Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of night
 Starless exposed, and ever-threatening storms
 Of Chaos blustering round, inclement sky, (iii. 422),

* These are also the four rivers of Dante's Hell, and he too places Lethe in a separate region.

except on the side facing the wall of Heaven, whence came light that made a “glimmering air.” As he proceeded along it he discerned “a gleam of dawning light,” which drew him toward it, and there he saw a “structure high” of golden stairs ascending up to Heaven,

At top whereof, but far more rich, appeared
The work as of a kingly palace-gate
With frontispiece of diamond and gold
Embellished ; thick with sparkling orient gems
The portal shone.*—iii. 504.

At the other extremity, on the surface of the globe

a bright sea flowed
Of jasper or of liquid pearl.

“Thence,” says the Argument, “Satan comes to the gate of Heaven, described ascending by stairs and the waters above the firmament that flow about it,” which waters we will presently show to be the Crystalline of the Ptolemaic Astronomy. Directly opposite the stairs a passage down to the earth opened in the solid globe.

Milton’s idea of the primitive earth was, that it occupied the centre of the world, which had only been created for its use (ix. 103 *seq.*). As we have just seen, he makes the angel hint that it resembled heaven ; and the same angel, in his account of creation, says,—

Earth now
Seemed like to heaven, a seat where gods might dwell
Or wander with delight, and love to haunt
Her sacred shades.—vii. 327.

Earth in her rich attire
Consummate lovely smiled.—*ib.* 501.

The poet also makes Satan exclaim :—

O earth ! how like to heaven ! if not preferred
More justly, seat worthier of gods, as built
With second thoughts, reforming what was old.
For what god after better worse would build ?—ix. 99.

* See **Excursus I.**

Milton, in fact, taxed his imagination to the utmost in his conception of earth before it had been polluted by the entrance of sin and death, and he was unable to go any further in that of Heaven. Besides, the language of Scripture, to which he bowed so submissively, led him to believe in the similitude.

THE PTOLEMAIC ASTRONOMY.

THE system of astronomy which, as we have seen, was the one in vogue in Milton's time, and which he followed in *Paradise Lost*, is what is named, but improperly, the Ptolemaic; for it was the prevalent one many centuries before Ptolemy was born. Plato, for example, tells us in his *Republic* that the Sirens were seated on the *eight* celestial spheres, and that it was their melodious voices that constituted what was termed the Harmony of the Spheres. The reason probably of its being named from Ptolemy is, that his work is the oldest in which it is developed.

The book from which Milton evidently derived his astronomic ideas was the treatise of *Sacro Bosco de Sphaera*, with the copious commentary of the Jesuit Clavins: and from that we will endeavour to give a brief sketch of the Ptolemaic system, a knowledge of which seems absolutely indispensable if we would fully understand *Paradise Lost* and much of the poetry of the seventeenth and preceding centuries.*

At first, as Clavius observes, mankind thought there was but one heaven, which was solid, in which the stars were fixed and the planets moved, and which made a diurnal revolution round the earth. This, for example, is the view given in the Old Testament. But as it was observed that the planets moved in a contrary direction to the diurnal motion of the heaven, and as it was a maxim in physics that no body can be actuated in itself at the same time by opposite and contrary motions, it was conceived that each planet must have a sphere of its own,

* For example, the *Paradiso* of Dante. Camões gives a pleasing view of the Ptolemaic system in the last book of his poem.

which carried it along by its revolution in a direction opposite to that of the starry heaven. As the planets were seven in number, their spheres, with that of the starry heaven, made eight, and that, as we have seen, was the number in the time of Plato. But when, some time after, Hipparchus discovered what is now termed the Precession of the Equinoxes, or recession of the point in which the ecliptic and the equinoctial line intersect each other, it became apparent that there was a peculiar motion in the starry sphere also, and therefore there must be a sphere external to it which caused the diurnal revolution. The number thus became nine, and the external one, which gave motion to the whole, was named the Primum Mobile. In this state astronomy came into the hands of the Christians, and as the cosmogony in Genesis spoke of the waters above the firmament, a tenth sphere seemed requisite.* “The ninth, or rather ninth and tenth spheres combined,” says our authority, “is the waters above the firmament, and, on account of its lucidity and perspicuity, as there are no denser parts as in the other orbs, such as the stars, may best be called by the name of waters. Some theologians therefore term it the Watery or Glacial, others the Crystalline Heaven.” But, exclusive of these nine or ten movable spheres, Venerable Bede and others affirm that there is another heaven, immovable, and without any star in it, the region and happy abode of the Angels and the Blest. This they name from fire, the Empyrean Heaven, because it is marvellously lucid and endued with the highest degree of brilliancy. It was supposed to envelope the movable spheres, and the motion of the Primum Mobile was believed to proceed from it.†

The earth thus formed the centre of the created world or

* This idea of a tenth sphere would seem to have been rather a late notion; for Dante, in his Poem and his Convito, speaks only of nine movable spheres beside the fixed Empyrean.

† This order of the spheres is frequently noticed by Dante, but the best poetic view of it is that of Camões. He thus describes the Empyrean:—

Este orbe que príncipe va cereando
Os outros mais pequenos, que en si tem,
Que está com luz tão clara radiando,
Que a vista cega, e a mente vil também,

universe. It was a globe, and was surrounded to a certain height by the air, the space between which and the sphere of the moon was, according to some astronomers,—for they were not all agreed on the subject,—filled with fire, the aether of the ancients.* The sphere of the Moon was succeeded by that of Mercury, because he was the most irregular in his motions, and this irregularity was held to be greater, the greater the distance from the Primum Mobile. Then came those of Venus, the Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn, the Starry Heaven, the Primum Mobile, and the Crystalline. They all, says Clavius, lie close together, fitting into each other like the coats of an onion. Motion is given to the whole, as some said, by the Animus Mundi; according to Dante and other Christian philosophers, by the Deity himself, whose peculiar abode was the Empyrean. The Primum Mobile, as being the external sphere, moved of course the fastest, as we may observe in the revolution of a wheel. The motion of the whole, as given by the Primum Mobile, was from east to west, while the interior spheres moved by their own power from west to east, just as a man in a ship can walk from stem to stern while the ship is under sail. The motion of the stars and planets with their spheres, is also likened to that of a knot in a table with the table, or a nail in a wheel with the wheel.

The irregularity however of the motions of the planets required additional machinery for their explanation, and various circles were therefore devised. Among these, we may notice those called the *Aequant* and the *Deferent*, and the *Epicycle*, which they all had except the Sun, who, of course, from the real state of the case, must have appeared to be the least irre-

*Empyreo se nomea, onde logrando
Puras almas estão de aquelle bem
Tamanho que elle só se entendo e alcança,
De que não ha no mundo semelhança.—Os Lusiadas, x. 81.*

* Dante also (Par. i. 58) notices the sphere of fire. Ariosto, when describing Astolfo's journey to the moon with St. John, says,

*Ruotando il carro per l' aria levossi
E tosto in mezzo il fuoco eterno giunse.
Tutta la sfera varcano del fuoco
Ed indi vanno al regno della luna.—Orl. Fur. xxxiv. 69, 70*

gular. The Epicycle, according to Clavius, "is a small orb, immersed in the Deferent orb in which the planet is borne. For the body of the planet is fixed in the Epicycle, while the centre of the Epicycle is continually carried along according to the motion of the eccentric or deferent orb."

It appears to have been this latter part of the system which gave least satisfaction to the mind of Milton, for he makes the Angel say,—

He his fabric of the heavens
 Hath left to their disputes, perhaps to move
 His laughter at their quaint opinions wide
 Hereafter, when they come to model heaven
 And calculate the stars, how they will wield
 The mighty frame, how build, unbuild, contrive,
 To save appearances, how gird the sphere
 With centric and eccentric scribbled o'er,
 Cycle and epicycle, orb in orb.—viii. 76.

Had it not been for his enthralment to the letter of Scripture, in all probability Milton, in whose mind the love of order and simplicity was so strong, would have gladly embraced the Copernican system, which he describes so clearly a few lines after the passage just quoted. The same spirit of submission to Scripture also caused him to deviate from the Ptolemaic astronomy with respect to the Empyrean; and perhaps it was that, or the secret influence of the Copernican system, which caused him to suppose a Chaos beyond the World; for the Empyrean of the current system would seem to have had nothing exterior to it.

In another point Milton seems to depart from his authorities. They, as we have seen, make the lucid Empyrean to form the outer orb, while he describes the outer orb, on the verge of Chaos, as being

Dark, waste, and wild, under the frown of night
 Starless exposed.—iii. 424;

and it is clear that he places it beyond all the other spheres, for he says,—

They pass the planets seven and pass the fixed,
 And that crystalline sphere whose balance weighs
 The trepidation talked, and that first moved, (iii. 481.)

ere they arrive at the “foot of heaven’s ascent;” which he describes as being on the outer sphere. We also see here, that he places the Primum Mobile external to the Crystalline, which last he makes to cause the trepidation of the Starry Heaven, *i. e.* the precession of the equinoxes, which was generally held to be the proper motion of that sphere. There is also some confusion where he says that the World was

Built on circumfluous waters, calm, in wide
 Crystalline ocean and the loud misrule
 Of Chaos far removed.—vii. 270;

for from this we might infer that the Crystalline was external to and did not form part of the world, while there was also a separation, perhaps the ‘opacious globe,’ between it and Chaos.

Again, Milton, by adopting the erroneous notion of the air being the Mosaic firmament, makes great confusion in his cosmology.

And God made

The firmament, expanse of liquid, pure,
 Transparent, elemental air, diffused
 In circuit to the uttermost convex
 Of this great round, partition firm and sure
 The waters underneath from those above
 Dividing.—vii. 263.*

As the ‘waters underneath’ are the ocean and seas of earth, and ‘those above’ are the Crystalline, the whole Ptolemaic system of spheres seems to be cast aside; unless we suppose, which no astronomer ever did, that the air penetrated and went beyond them, being the support of the Crystalline. But the truth is, taking what view we will of the cosmology of Genesis, it is quite incompatible with the Ptolemaic astronomy.

* Satan from the lower stair of heaven
 Down right into the World’s first region throws
 His flight precipitant, and winds with ease
 Through the *pure marble air* his oblique way.—iii. 562;

and he directs his course to the sun “through the *calm firmament*. ”

EDEN AND PARADISE.

For blissful Paradise

Of God the Garden was, by him in the east
 Of Eden planted. Eden stretched her line
 From Auran eastward to the royal towers
 Of great Seleucia, built by Grecian kings,
 Or where the sons of Eden long before
 Dwelt in Telassar. In this pleasant soil
 His far more pleasant garden God ordained,
 Out of the fertile ground he caused to grow
 All trees of noblest kind for sight, smell, taste ;
 And all amid them stood the tree of life
 High eminent, blooming ambrosial fruit
 Of vegetable gold ; and next to life
 Our death, the tree of knowledge, grew fast by,
 Knowledge of good bought dear by knowing ill.
 Southward through Eden went a river large,
 Nor changed his course, but through the shaggy hill
 Passed underneath ingulphed ; for God had thrown
 That mountain as his garden-mould high raised
 Upon the rapid current, which through veins
 Of porous earth with kindly thirst updrawn,
 Rose a fresh fountain, and with many a rill
 Watered the garden ; thence united fell
 Down the steep glade, and met the nether flood
 Which from his darksome passage now appears,
 And now, divided into four main streams,
 Runs diverse, wandering many a famous realm
 And country, whereof here needs no account.—iv. 210 *seq.*

In this localization of Eden and the happy garden, Milton's love for geographic specification appears as in other parts of his poems. The Scripture account of Eden is highly indefinite,

and involved, so to say, in the misty veil of venerable tradition. God planted, it says, a garden in the east of Eden (*Delight*), and a “river went out of Eden to water the garden, and thence it was divided and became four main streams.” The names of these streams are Pison, Gihon, Hiddekel (*Tigris*),* and Euphrates. As it is quite clear that there is nowhere on the actual surface of the earth any water-system corresponding with this, and most certainly the Tigris and Euphrates are not arms of any one great main stream, it is utterly vain for us to seek for Eden in the mountains of Armenia, or, with Milton, in the plains of Mesopotamia.

Milton was led to this supposition by those passages of Scripture in which Eden occurs as a proper name, and he too precipitately concluded that they must be the same with the original region of that name. The prophet Amos (i. 5) mentions apparently a small kingdom called Beth-Eden (*House of Eden*, or *Abode of Joy*) in connection with Damascus, and Ezekiel (xxvii. 23) names Eden in connection with Haran and Canneh, places in Mesopotamia, and elsewhere (2 Kings xix. 12), “the children of Eden which were in Thelasar” are spoken of along with Haran and other places in its vicinity. Milton then combines these notices, and he extends the region of Eden from the Hauran (*Auronitis*), a district south of Damascus, to Seleucia on the Tigris, his imagination bestowing antediluvian verdure and fertility on the sandy wastes between Damascus and the Euphrates. We say that he gives it this extent, notwithstanding that the annotators make his Auran to be Haran on the Euphrates; for he gives this place its proper name (xii. 131), and though here, in his usual manner, he omits the incipient *h*, he never would change *a* into *au*.

In the original narrative, the garden, like the oriental paradeses or parks, is represented as lying in a plain, with a river flowing through it: Dante, in accordance with the peculiar character of his poem, and taking advantage of the figurative language of the prophet Ezekiel,† placed the terrestrial Para-

* Milton (ix. 71) names the original river Tigris, even before it entered the garden.

† Ezek. xxviii. 2, 12-14, *Vulg.*

dise on the summit of a mountain surrounded by the sea in the Antarctic hemisphere, and Ariosto on a mountain in the heart of Afria, beyond the Line. Hence probably Milton conceived the idea of making a mound cast up over the river of Eden the site of the Garden; he derived, it is likely, the idea of the “fresh fountain” from the LXX., who have *fountain* instead of *mist*, in Gen. ii. 6.

To obviate the objection that the site of the Garden is nowhere now to be found, Milton hazards the assertion (xi. 829) that at the time of the Deluge the mound was swept away by the returning waves and carried into the Persian Gulf, where it became an “island salt and bare,” to prove, as he says, that

God attributes to place
No sanctity, if none be thither brought
By men who there frequent, or therein dwell.—xi. 836.

PNEUMATOLOGY.

MILTON placed in Chaos a number of allegoric personages, such as Chaos himself, Night his spouse, Rumour, Chance, Discord, etc., but they are, of course, inactive, and take no part in the action of the poem.

Heaven is the abode of God, the Almighty Father, his Son, and it is to be presumed, the Holy Spirit, though his personality is dubiously noticed in the poem. The remaining denizens of Heaven are the Angels, infinite in number and divided into different ranks and degrees.

St. Paul, in more than one place in his Epistles, mentions different titles of rank with relation to the Angels, which he terms Thrones, Dominions, Principalities, and Powers. The Fathers, as usual, working on this foundation, constructed a celestial hierarchy, which we find fully developed in the work of the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Using those four titles, and adding to them, under the name of Virtues (*Virtutes*, i. e. mights or powers), another term (*δυνάμεις*) which occurs in the Epistle to the Romans (viii. 23),* then making Angels of the Seraphim and Cherubim of the Old Testament, and finally, two orders of the Angels and Archangels, he formed nine orders, corresponding with the nine celestial spheres, which he arranged in three triads in the following manner :—

Seraphim, Cherubim, Thrones,
Dominations, Virtues, Powers,
Principalities, Archangels, Angels.

Dionysius uses not merely Angel, but Virtue, as a term ap-

* See also 1 Peter iii. 22.

pliable to every member of the celestial hierarchy, in which he is followed by Milton, who (v. 371) calls the Archangel Raphael an Angelic Virtue.*

Dante, both in his poem and in his prose works, adopts this division, and expatiates on it—of course with his own peculiar political views: his arrangement is:—

Seraphim, Cherubim, Powers,
Dominations, Virtues, Principalities,
Thrones, Archangels, Angels.

We also find this system in Tasso's great poem. The following lines from Drayton's *Man in the Moon* will show how it had already made its way into English poetry.

Those hierarchies, that Jove's great will supply,
Whose orders formed in triplicity,
Holding their places by the treble Trine,
Make up that holy theologic line;
Thrones, Cherubim, and Seraphim, that rise
As the first three; when Principalities
With Dominations, Potestates are plac'd
The second; and the Ephionian last,
Which Virtues, Angels, and Archangels be.

We have seen above that Milton, adhering to the plain language of Scripture, has boldly assigned a human form and human passions to the Father; the same he has done to the Son; the Spirit is left by him in obscurity. He does not intimate that these divine persons stood in need of food, but the Angels he makes in most respects like man. Thus they eat and drink (v. 630), they sleep (*v. 654*), they dance and sing (*v. 619*), and burn incense (*vii. 659*) before the throne of God. Their musical instruments are similar to those used on earth (*v. 594*). They also have arms and armour like to those of men. The angels of all orders are, contrary to Scripture, furnished with wings, which constitutes the chief difference between their appearance and that of man.

These celestial beings had dwelt for countless ages in su-

* This however is of no importance, as he had a little before (*v. 277*) termed him a Seraph.

preme bliss, beneath the sole dominion of God, till on a time they were all summoned to appear before his throne, when he announced to them that on that day he had begotten him whom he declared to be his only son, and who was henceforth to reign over them as his vicegerent. This announcement excited jealousy and discontent in the mind of Lucifer, one of the prime of the celestial hierarchs, and he drew off a third part of the inhabitants of Heaven to his government in the north, and there raised the standard of revolt. The faithful angels were sent to oppose them, and battles were fought, till the Son came borne on the Cherubie Car of the Father, and drove them out of Heaven into Chaos, failing through which for the space of nine days, Hell finally received them and closed over them.

We have seen that five of the names of the celestial hierarchies were taken from terms used by St. Paul. Angel is a word of constant occurrence in the Scriptures, and is the Greek translation of the Hebrew *maldk* (מֶלֶךְ) ‘messenger, envoy,’ as it was chiefly in that character that they appeared to mankind. The term Archangel appears but once in Scripture, namely in the dubious epistle of Jude, where it is applied to Michael, who in the book of Daniel is styled “the great prince.” The Cherubim are properly the bearers of the portable throne of Jehovah, and were not regarded as angels by the ancient Israelites; and the Seraphim, who only occur in the vision of Isaiah, were, as we hope to be able to prove, the same as the Cherubim.

Milton derived the names of nearly all his good and evil angels from the Scriptures. A few are the names given there to angels, others those of the gods of the heathen, the remainder names of men transferred to angels. These we will now proceed to explain. We must however previously observe that the ideas of the Israelites respecting angels seem to have been very much modified by the Light-religion of Persia, with which they became acquainted during the Captivity. We now find seven principal angels spoken of, answering to the seven Amshaspands of Zoroastrian theology, and proper names given to some of them; we also meet with Satan, occupying as it

were the place of the Persian Ahriman; for in the parts of Scripture written before or during the Captivity there is no clear allusion to such a personage. From the idea of the Zoroastrian Ferwers came that of Guardian Angels of individuals (Matt. xviii. 10; Acts xii. 7), of kingdoms (Dan. x. 13), and of the elements (Rev. xvi. 5), and the best explanation of the Angels of the Churches in the Revelation is, that they are the Guardian Angels of these societies of Christians—answering in this, as in so many other points, to the Genii of the Roman religion.*

We will now explain the names of angels, good and evil, used by Milton.

1. Michael (מִיכָּאֵל *who as God?*) first appears in Daniel (x. 13) as the patron of Israel before God; in the Apocalypse (xii. 2) he is the leader of the good angels in the war against the Dragon and his angels. In the epistle of Jude allusion is made to a contest between Michael and Satan about the body of Moses, as related in some apocryphal book.

2. Gabriel (גֶּבְרַיָּאֵל *Man of God*) is also introduced in Daniel (viii. 16, ix. 21) as the instructor of the prophet. He is sent to announce to Zacharias the birth of John the Baptist (Luke i. 19), and to Mary the birth of Jesus (*v.* 26).

3. Raphael (רָפָאֵל *whom God heals*) is in Chronicles (1, xxvi. 7) the proper name of a man; but in the apocryphal book of Tobit he is an angel who under a human form accompanies the hero's son Tobias, and displays a *healing* power by driving away the evil spirit from Sarah and by curing the blindness of Tobit himself.

4. Uriel (עַרְיאֵל *Light of God*) does not appear in the Scriptures. His name however occurs in the apocryphal fourth book of Esdras (x. 28), and in the writings of the Rabbin. These last say that these four angels stand around the throne of God; Michael on the right, Uriel on the left, Gabriel in front, and Raphael in the rear—the respective stations of Reuben, Dan, Judah, and Ephraim in the camp of Israel in the wilderness.—*Par. Lost*, iii. 618, iv. 555.

* See our Mythology of Greece and Italy, third edition: *Genius*.

5. Abdiel (**עבד אל** *Servant of God*), the name of the father of one of the servants of the king of Judah who were ordered to seize the prophet Jeremiah (Jer. xxxvi. 26), used by the poet as the name of an angel. It is the same as the Arabic 'Abdallah.—*Par. Lost*, v. 805.

6. Zophiel (**צָפְנַל** *Watchman of God*). As this name does not occur in Scripture, nor, as far as we are aware, in the Rabbinic writings, it is probably a coinage of the poet's own, to suit the office assigned to this angel.—*Par. Lost*, vi. 535.

7. Ithuriel (**יתּוּרִיאֵל** *Searcher of God*). This name also has been coined by the poet, to correspond with the office of the angel. It should have been Yethuriel.—*Par. Lost*, iv. 788.

8. Zephon (**זֶפֹן** *a looking-out*), the name of the head of one of the families of the tribe of Gad (Numb. xxvi. 15).—*Par. Lost*, iv. 788.

9. Uzziel (**עֻזְיאל** *Might of God*), a frequent proper name in Scripture: see Exod. vi. 18; Numb. iii. 19.—*Par. Lost*, iv. 782.

The names of the fallen angels are, as might be expected, much more numerous; they are as follows:—

10. Satan (**שָׁטָן** *Adversary*). This name, in our opinion, does not occur in the portions of Scripture written before the return from Babylon; for though the body of the book of Job was probably composed in the seventh century b. c., the introduction may have been written or modified at a later period, and Satan have been then introduced; just as the place in which it is said (2 Sam. xxiv. 1), “The anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah,” becomes in the long posterior Chronicles (1, xxi. 1), “And Satan stood up against Israel and provoked David to number Israel.”

The Satan of the Jews was then evidently the Zoroastrian Ahriman, but with far more limited powers. In the book of Job we find him appearing with the angels before Jehovah in heaven, and, though inclined to cause evil, unable to do so without his permission. He appears again in Zechariah (iii. 1) as standing before the angel of the Lord at the right hand of

the high-priest Joshua “to resist him.” These are the only notices of Satan in the Old Testament: he is probably meant in the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon where it is said (ii. 24), “through the envy of the Devil ($\deltaιαβόλον$) death came into the world,” in allusion to the Fall of Adam. In the New Testament he holds a prominent place, as the chief of the evil spirits, the opponent of God and the tempter and punisher of men. Josephus never mentions him.

11. Beelzebub (בָּעֵל־בּוּבּ *Fly-lord*) was the name of the god worshiped at the Philistine city of Ekron, where he gave oracular responses (2 Kings i. 2). He seems to have been regarded as a protecting deity against the flies, mosquitoes, etc., which are so annoying in warm countries, and to have answered to the Zeus Apomyios of Greece,—perhaps was the same with him, if the theory of the Philistines having been a colony from Greece be correct. In the New Testament he seems to be identical with Satan, as the proper name of the chief of the evil spirits.

12. Moloch (מָלֹךְ *King*) was the God of the Ammonites (1 Kings xi. 7) to whom children were offered in sacrifice, which was termed “passing through the fire,” as they were burnt-offerings; it however is not improbable that they were previously put to death. From the time of king Ahaz the worship of Moloch prevailed greatly at Jerusalem, where his altar stood in the Valley of the son of Hinnom, on the south side of the city. The Rabbin say that his image was of brass, of the human form, but with the head of an ox; it was hollow, and heated from beneath, and its arms were so formed as that the child could be laid in them, and thus be burned to death, while its cries were drowned by the sound of drums. This is probably imaginary; but it is not unlike the description of the statue of Kronos at Carthage, given by Diodorus (xx. 14), to whom human victims were offered.

13. Chemos (כְּמוֹשָׁ *Victor?*) was a god of the Ammonites (Judges xi. 24) and Moabites; but chiefly of this last people. Jerome, who is followed by Selden and Milton, held him to be the same as Baal Peor (בָּעֵל־פֹּאַר *Lord of the Clest?*), so named

perhaps from the site of his temple, in whose honour women violated their chastity (Num. xxv.)—*Par. Lost*, i. 406.

14. Thammuz (**תָּמֹׁעֵז**). When Ezekiel in his vision was brought to the temple at Jerusalem, he there saw that “there sat women weeping for Tammuz” (viii. 14). This is the only notice of this being in the Scriptures; but the Fathers Cyril and Jerome inferred that he was the same as the Phœnician Adonis, whose worship was afterwards introduced into Greece.—*Par. Lost*, i. 446.

15. Astoreth (**אַשְׁתָּרֶת** *Star?*) is the Astarte of the Greeks and Romans. She was a goddess of the Sidonians, whose worship, along with that of Baal, was adopted by Israel even in the days of the Judges (ii. 13, x. 6). She is supposed to have been the Moon or the planet Venus.—*Par. Lost*, i. 438. It is to be noted, that Milton also (i. 422) uses the plural of this name, Ashtaroth, in the sense of goddesses, in union with Baalim.

16. Rimmon (**רִמְמֹן**) was a god of Syria (2 Kings v. 18). The origin of his name is uncertain; but as it signifies *pomegranate*, he may have been regarded as a deity of fruitfulness, of which that fruit was a symbol.—*Par. Lost*, i. 467.

17. Nisroch (**נִסְרוֹךְ**), a god of the Ninevites (2 Kings xix. 37), about whom nothing certain is known.—*Par. Lost*, vi. 447.

18. Adrammelech (**אֲדְרָמְלֵךְ**, *Splendour of the king*), an idol which the colonists from Sepharvaim in Mesopotamia brought with them to Samaria (2 Kings xvii. 31).—*Par. Lost*, vi. 365.

19. Ariel (**אַרְיֵל**, *Lion of God*) seems merely to mean, a valiant warrior, a hero, as there are similar compounds in Arabic and Persian. It occurs as a proper name (Ez. viii. 16); in Isaiah (xxix. 1) it is a title of Jerusalem; and in Ezekiel (xliv. 15) it signifies the altar of burnt-offering.—*Par. Lost*, vi. 371.

20. Arioch (**אַרְיוֹחַ**), a Chaldean proper name (Dan. ii. 14). It was probably used by the Rabbin as the name of an evil spirit. “As also great Arioch, that is termed the spirit of revenge.”—Nash, *Pierce Penniless*, p. 78.—*Par. Lost*, vi. 371.

21. Ramiel (**רָמִיאֵל**, *Exaltation of God*) is apparently one of the names coined by the poet, for it does not occur in Scripture.—*Par. Lost.* vi. 372.

22. Dagon (**דָּגוֹן**, *little fish*) was the celebrated god of the Philistines. The Rabbin said he had a human head and arms, but was otherwise shaped as a fish. He may however have been merely a sea-god, corresponding with Poseidon.

23. Asmadai (**אַשְׁמָדָא**), or Asmodæus. Milton uses both of these names (iv. 168, vi. 365), but evidently means the same being. The former is his name in the Rabbinic writings, where he is said to be the king of the Shedeem, or demons (see Buxtorf, *s. v.*); the latter is his appellation in the book of Tobit, where he appears as a ‘fleshy incubus.’

24. Belial (**בְּלִיאָלָה**, *Worthlessness, wickedness*) is merely a compound substantive, and in the usual oriental manner, profligate bad men are termed *sons of wickedness*. In the New Testament however we meet with Belial, or Beliar, used as synonymous with Satan.

25. Mammon (**מַמְׁוָן**, *Reliance*) is merely a personification of *riches* as a ground of trust; see Buxtorf, *s. v.* We meet with it in the New Testament, Matt. vi. 24.

26. Azazel (**אֶזְזָלָה**). In Leviticus (xvi. 8, 10, 26) we find that on the day of atonement the high priest took two buck-goats and cast lots on them; the one to be for Jehovah, and to be offered in sacrifice, the other for Azazel, and to be let go in the wilderness. The question then is, who or what was Azazel? a name which occurs nowhere else. The most current opinion, that which Milton follows, is, that it was the name of an evil demon, supposed to dwell in deserts and to be appeased by victims. Others think it was the goat itself, as signifying the *averter* or *remover*, deriving the name from the Arabic verb *'azala*, to remove. It is one of those points on which certainty is hardly to be attained. Milton's motive for making Azazel the infernal standard-bearer, and styling him a cherub (i. 534), was perhaps an erroneous derivation of the name from *'azaz* (**אָזָז**), to be strong.

CHERUBIC CAR OF JEHOVAIL.

WHEN Milton resolved to describe the war in heaven as a necessary part of the economy of his poem, he felt himself obliged to employ for that purpose terms taken from the usages of war on earth, and he had the less scruple at doing so, as Scripture speaks of the arms of God himself. Accordingly we find the angels on both sides using the spear and shield, and other arms of offence and defence, and mounted in brazen chariots drawn by “fiery steeds” (vi. 16, 391). The chariots in the “armoury of God” seem to have been of a different kind; for they were endowed with spontaneous motion. Of them Raphael says,—

Chariots winged
 From the armoury of God, where stand of old
 Myriads, between two brazen mountains lodged,
 Against a solemn day harnessed at hand,
 Celestial equipage; and now came forth
 Spontaneous, for within them spirit lived,
 Attendant on their Lord.—vii. 199.

Of God’s own chariot it is said—

. . . Forth rushed with whirlwind sound
 The chariot of paternal Deity,
 Flashing thick flames, wheel within wheel, undrawn,
 Itself instinct with spirit, but convoyed
 By four cherubic shapes. Four faces each
 Had wondrous, as with stars their bodies all
 And wings were set with eyes, with eyes the wheels
 Of beryl, and careering fires between:
 Over their head a crystal firmament,
 Whereon a sapphire throne, inlaid with pure
 Amber and colours of the watery arch.—vi. 750.

This is evidently what we may term the Cherubic Car, or Portable Throne of Jehovah, which forms a more conspicuous part of the religious and prophetic imagery of Scripture than critics and readers seem generally to be aware. It is evident that it was the will of the Deity that the mind of the people of Israel should be only raised to a proportionate point of elevation above that of the surrounding nations. Hence the material character of a great portion of their religion, as exhibited in the sacrifices, etc.; hence too their erroneous ideas of cosmogony and cosmology. We have elsewhere hinted at the probability of their having conceived a material mode of communication between Heaven and Earth, and in the present instance we find a vehicle for Jehovah himself, or his representative angel, corresponding with the chariots of the gods of Hellas and the various vehicles of those of India. Whether our explanation be the right one or not, the fact is undeniable. We will now proceed to examine the places in Scripture where it appears. As the fullest, though not the earliest, account of it occurs in Ezekiel, and as it is from that place that Milton took his idea of the chariot, we will commence with it.

I looked, and behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud and a continuous fire with brightness around it, and from amidst it as the gleam of polished brass, from amidst the fire, and from amidst it the likeness of four living beings; and this was their appearance, they had the likeness of a man, and each had four faces and each had four wings, and their feet were straight feet, and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot, and they glittered as the gleaming of shining brass, and man's hands under their wings on their four sides, and the faces and the wings of the four—their wings were joined together—did not turn when they went, they went each straight forwards: and the likeness of their faces—the four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion on the right side, and the face of an ox on the left side, and the face of an eagle. Their faces and their wings were stretched upwards; they had each two joining each other, and two covering their bodies; and they went each straight forwards, whither the spirit was to go they went, they did not turn as they went. And the likeness of the living beings—their appearance was as burning coals of fire, as the appearance of torches; fire went among the living beings and it was bright, and lightnings went forth out of the fire; and the living beings ran and returned like the appearance of the flash of lightning.

And I looked at the living beings, and behold, a wheel on the earth beside (each of) the living beings, with its four faces ; the appearance of the wheels and their workmanship was as the gleam of the Tharshish-stone, and the four had the one likeness, and their appearance and their workmanship as if there was one wheel within another. When they went they went on their four sides ; they turned not when they went. And their felloes were high and were fearful, and they were all four round, full of eyes. And when the living beings went the wheels went beside them, and when the living beings rose from the earth the wheels rose ; whithersoever the spirit was to go they went, whithersoever the spirit was to go, and the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels. When those went these went, and when those stood these stood, and when those rose the wheels rose along with them, for the spirit of the living being was in the wheels. And the appearance above the heads of the living beings was a firmament, as the gleam of the splendid crystal, stretched out above over their heads ; and under the firmament their wings extended the one to the other ; and each had two which covered *their faces*, and each had two which covered their bodies. And I heard the sound of their wings when they went, like the sound of many waters, like the sound of the Almighty ; a loud sound, as the sound of a camp, when they stood with their wings down. And there was a sound from above, from the firmament that was over their heads, when they stood with their wings down. And above on the firmament which was over their heads, like the appearance of a sapphire stone was the likeness of a throne, and upon the likeness of the throne was a likeness as the appearance of a man above it. And I saw as the gleam of burnished brass, as the appearance of fire, a brightness around it : from the appearance of his loins upwards, and from the appearance of his loins downwards, I saw as the appearance of fire and brightness around it. As the appearance of the bow that is in the clouds in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness around. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of Jehovah.

In this description it will be observed that the word Cherubim does not occur ; but in the tenth chapter, where the prophet again describes the chariot of Jehovah, he employs the term Cherubim, and no other. He there adds, that “*their whole flesh, and their backs, and their hands, and their wings, and the wheels, were full of eyes.*”

When we attempt to form a conception of this chariot, we must suppose that brilliant ground-plane which the prophet terms a firmament, to be very large and of an oblong form.

Under each angle was placed a Cherub, and further back under it, but not advancing so far as to interfere with the free action of the wings of the Cherubim, were the wheels, each opposite the centre of the side of the firmament. These wheels resembled an open ring-dial, each consisting of two rings cutting each other at right angles. We may regard the Cherubim as having four-sided bodies, with a face and a wing at each side; and when they were in motion, the two wings which were at right angles with the line in which they went were employed, while the other two were folded, and so “covered their bodies;” their feet were “straight,” *i. e.* nearly square, so they needed not to turn. The Cherubim must have been conceived of a great height, to correspond with the altitude of the wheels.

There is only one place more in Scripture where we find the Cherubic Car in motion, namely, the eighteenth Psalm. It is there said, “And he rode upon a cherub and did fly; yea, he did fly upon the wings of the wind.” Most persons, we fear, get erroneous ideas in reading this verse, conceiving Jehovah as mounted on a single Cherub; but Cherub is here what is termed a collective term, and is equivalent to Cherubim, as it is in the Septuagint and the Vulgate, and with which it is used interchangeably in the tenth chapter of Ezekiel. We thus see, that it is the Cherubic Car that is meant here, and possibly by “the wings of the wind” (*ruach*, רוח) is meant the wings of the Cherubim, in whom there was Spirit (*ruach*, רוח, Ezek. i. 20).

It would also seem, that this Cherubic vehicle was indicated by the *two* Cherubim in the Holy-of-holies of the temple and tabernacle. There were only two, either for the sake of convenience, or because there was only that number in the original conception of the vehicle. The phrase, “Thou that dwellest *between* the Cherubim” would, in this case, more properly be rendered, “Thou that sittest *upon* the Cherubim.”

By comparing the following place of Daniel (vii. 9) with the passage of Ezekiel given above, it will appear that both prophets mean the same thing.

I beheld until the thrones were placed, and the Ancient of Days seated. His raiment was like white snow, and the hair of his head like pure wool; his throne was flames of fire, his wheels burning fire; a stream of fire flowed and went forth from before him.

Here *thrones* may be, in the usual manner, *i. q. throne*; and the “stream of fire” may be equivalent to the “firmament” of Ezekiel. We may suppose the vehicle to be standing on the earth. It was perhaps deemed needless to mention the Cherubim.

And they saw the God of Israel, and beneath his feet was as a work of clear sapphire and as the heaven itself for brightness.—Ex. xxiv. 10.

This also appears to be Ezekiel’s firmament.

Behold a throne was set in heaven, and one seated on the throne, and he that was seated was like to a jasper and a sardine stone, and a rainbow was round the throne, like the appearance of an emerald. And round about the throne were four-and-twenty thrones, and upon the thrones were seated four-and-twenty elders; . . . and from the throne proceeded lightnings and sounds and thunder; . . . and before the throne as a sea of glass, like unto crystal; and opposite ($\epsilon\nu\mu\epsilon\sigma\omega$)* and around the throne, four living beings full of eyes before and behind. And the first was like a lion, and the second like an ox, and the third had the face of a man, and the fourth was like a flying eagle. And the four living beings having each of them six wings, are full within and without of eyes, and they cease not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come—Rev. iv. 3.

On comparing this passage with those of Ezekiel and Daniel it will be apparent that the imagery is the same, the sea of glass, for example, being the firmament. As is usual with prophetic imagery, it varies. The Living-beings, *i. e.* the Cherubim, appear to have each only one face, and like the Seraphim of Isaiah they have each six wings and they speak with a human voice. The scene here is as it were in the temple in heaven, for the altar is in front of the throne (viii. 3).

We will finally consider the vision of Isaiah :—

I beheld the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and elevated, and his skirts filled the temple; Seraphim were standing by him; each had six wings; with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet,

* See *Excursus II.*

and with two he flew. And one cried to the other, saying, Holy, holy, holy Jehovah of hosts, the whole earth is full of his glory. And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of the crier, and the house was filled with smoke.

Here again we think we discern the same imagery, the scene being the temple on earth. The Seraphim, as is evident from the Apocalypse, are only the Cherubim under another name. As Ezekiel calls them the Living-beings, so Isaiah terms them the Burning- or Bright-beings—for that is the meaning of their name (שְׁנָפִים). Both here and in the Apocalypse the Cherubim are represented as bearers, who stand about the vehicle which they have laid down, ready to take it up when required.

We thus see how erroneous is the theory which Milton adopted of the Cherubim and Seraphim being angels. The Cherub (כֶּרֶב) was, of course, a being of imagination; what the original conception of its form was it is difficult to conjecture, most probably that so fully given by Ezekiel. The etymology of the word is uncertain;* some compare the Cherubim with the Sphinxes of Egypt, or with the Griffons, the guardians of treasure in the East, as they were set to keep the garden of Eden, and there is a resemblance in the names; or with Garúda, the bird that is bearer of Víshnú in the mythology of India. But all is dubious.

* The proper pronunciation of the word is Kerûb. But the LXX. used the Greek letter χ in general to express the Hebrew כ, and our translators therefore employed ch.

FORM OF THE SERPENT.

MILTON thus describes the Tempter's approach to Eve:—

So spake the enemy of mankind, enclosed
In serpent, innate bad, and toward Eve
Addressed his way, not with indented wave,
Prone on the ground, as since, but on his rear,
Circular base of rising folds, that towered
Fold above fold a surging maze; his head
Crested aloft, and carbuncle his eyes,
With burnished neck of verdant gold, erect
Amidst his circling spires, that on the grass
Floated redundant.—ix. 494.

These beautiful lines certainly present distinct images to the mind, but they involve a physical impossibility; for no animal formed as the serpent is could ever advance in the manner here described, and it is remarkable that the poet says of him immediately after (*v. 631*), in apparent contradiction to what he had asserted above,—

He leading swiftly rolled
In tangles, and made intricate seem straight,
To mischief swift.

And he had before said:—

Close the serpent sly
Insinuating wove with Gordian twine
His braided train.—iv. 347.

We may perceive then that Milton held the prevalent opinion—prevalent even at the present day—that “upon thy belly thou shalt go” was a part of the serpent’s doom; he may however have only meant that he was to lose the power of going in any other way. Now we think that the Scriptural

narrative may be relieved of a great difficulty by showing that it is not at all necessary to understand it in this manner.

The scope of the narrative seems to be, that to each of the offending parties there was made an addition of suffering and hardship to their previous condition. Thus the man, who had been placed in the Garden of Eden "to *dress* it and to keep it," was now "in the sweat of his brow" to derive his sustenance from a less genial soil; the woman, who, from the whole tenour of the narrative, was to bear children, was now to bring them forth "in sorrow," and was to be ruled over by her husband. All analogy then leads us to conceive that the serpent always went on his belly, and that the punishment was that, instead of fruits we may suppose, he was to "eat dust," and there was to be enmity between him and the seed of the woman. The passage, then, according to all the principles of the Hebrew language, may be rendered—"Going upon thy belly thou shalt eat dust," etc.; and there is no necessity of supposing, with Dr. Adam Clarke, that the serpent was an ape, or of adopting any of the other unnatural solutions of the difficulty that have been offered.



EXCURSUS I.

JACOB'S DREAM.

WE know nothing in the whole circle of truth or fiction more calculated to make a profound impression on a susceptible imagination than the dream of Jacob “in the field of Luz.” It appears to us however that the full force of the impression has been weakened by the circumstance of all the versions—including that of the LXX.—agreeing to represent Jehovah as standing *above* the ladder, and thence addressing the slumbering patriarch. No doubt the words of the original will bear this sense; but if we can show that they will also allow us to suppose the ladder rising up indefinitely toward heaven, while Jehovah stands at the head of the slumberer, we think we shall have added strength to the image.

The Hebrew phrase rendered “stood *above*” (*uissâb 'âlâu*, עִלָּבְעַד) occurs again (in the plural) in Gen. xviii. 2, where it is rightly rendered “stood *by* him;” and in *vv.* 3 and 8 of the same chapter we find the preposition (*'al*, עַל) rendered in a similar manner. Surely then we need not hesitate to understand the phrase in the same sense in Jacob's dream. We have only to suppose that Jehovah was conceived to have descended before the angels. In a similar manner in the Ilias (ii. 20), *στῆ δ' ἄρ'* *ὑπὲρ κεφαλῆς* is used of the dream sent to Agamemnon, which we must suppose, as it took the form of Nestor, to have stood at the head of the prince, instead of hovering over him in the air.*

We would make this further observation. In conformity with the designs of Providence, the religious ideas of the people of Israel were of a sensuous and material character, of which we have had an instance in their giving an aerial vehicle to Jehovah himself. The celestial ladder or stairs may then have formed a portion of the religious imagery of Israel, of the real existence of which there may have been no doubt, though only this once, and that in a dream, was it permitted to mortal eye to gaze on it: it may remind one of the Arabian tradition of the Garden of Irem. We should remember that the angels of the Old

* As Agamemnon was lying, and the Dream standing, the prep. *over* is properly employed: it is the same in Jacob's dream. In Gen. xviii. 2 Abraham is sitting and the wayfarers are standing; in *v.* 3 he is bowed down before them; in *v.* 8 they are sitting and he is standing; and therefore in all these places the prep. *over* is used: see also Job i. 6; Is. vi. 2. So with the Latin *sub*: it must sometimes be rendered *in*, as in “*Grato Pyrrha sub antro;*” but the sense of *under* is always present.

Testament are not represented as having wings, and that therefore a material medium may have been supposed requisite for their passage to and fro between earth and heaven.

We have seen that Milton makes this ladder a reality, but he seems to terminate it at the World.* We must however recollect that his angels are winged.

EXCURSUS II.

בְּמִתְּחַדָּה ; ἐν μέσῳ, ἀνὰ μέσον.

Many erroneous conceptions have, in our opinion, been caused in various places of Scripture by the translators not understanding the true meaning of this phrase. That meaning is, as we shall now show, *directly opposite*, and hence *in the middle*, as being then opposite all parts.

And it came to pass when Moses went unto the tabernacle, that all the people rose up and stood every man at his tent door, and looked after Moses *until he was gone into* the tabernacle; and it came to pass as Moses *entered into* the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the LORD talked with Moses; and all the people saw the cloudy pillar stand at the tabernacle door. . . . And the LORD spake unto Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his friend. And he turned again into the camp, but his servant Joshua . . . departed not out of (**בְּמִתְּחַדָּה**) the tabernacle.

Here translators, commencing with the LXX., from not understanding the import of this phrase, have vitiated the meaning of the whole passage: for the Hebrew does *not* say that Moses went *into* the tabernacle: quite the contrary. What is rendered *until he was gone into* should be *while he was going to*, and *entered into* should be *was going to*; finally, *not out of* should be *not from before*. We are to observe that the tabernacle stood at some distance from the camp, with the cloudy pillar on it. The people saw Moses going thither with Joshua; they saw the pillar descend and stand at the door and there converse with Moses, whom they saw return, leaving Joshua after him. Now as they thus witnessed everything, it seems evident that Moses could not have gone *into* the tabernacle, and the Hebrew does not say that he did so; and consequently it was *before* it that Joshua remained.

In 1 Sam. ix., when Saul and his man had been directed by the maidens whom they met outside of the city to Samuel, "As soon," said they, "as you come *to* the city ye shall meet him;" "they went up to the city, going direct (**בְּמִתְּחַדָּה**) to the city, and behold! Samuel was coming out toward

* In Dante (Par. xxi. terz. 10) it ascends out of sight from the sphere of Saturn:—

Vid' io uno scal o eretto in suso,
Tanto che nol seguiva la mia luce.

them; . . . and Saul drew near to Samuel *before* (נִזְבֵּח) the gate." It must be quite manifest, we think, to any one who reads the original, that they did not enter the city.

Omitting other places of the Old, we will consider those of the New Testament in which *ἐν μέσῳ* occurs. "But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced *before* them (*ἐν μέσῳ*)," Matt. xiv. 6. Hero the translators have given the exact sense; for the tables at which the guests lay being at the upper end of the room, she must have danced in the space between them and the door.

"They found him in the temple, sitting *in the midst* (*ἐν μέσῳ*) of the doctors, both hearing them and asking them questions," Luke ii. 46. Here critics observe that the scholars sat at the feet of the doctors—on the ground, of course—*i.e.* before them. Render then *ἐν μέσῳ* as in the above place of Matthew, and all is correct.

"And I beheld, and lo! in the *midst* (*ἐν μέσῳ*) of the throne and of the four beasts and in the *midst* of the elders stood a Lamb," Rev. v. 6. "For the Lamb which is in the *midst* (*ἀνά μέσον*) of the throne," vii. 17. The place where the Lamb stood was on the sea of glass directly *opposite* the throne, and so he was in the middle of, or opposite (נִזְבֵּח), the beasts and the elders. The employment of *ἀνά μέσον* here as equivalent to *ἐν μέσῳ* will serve to elucidate the following very difficult passage.

"Is it so that there is not a wise man among you? no, not one that shall be able to judge *between his brethren?*" 1 Cor. vi. 5. This certainly seems plain enough; but when we look at the Greek, we find that it is *between his brother* (*ἀνά μέσον τοῦ ἀδελφοῦ ἀντοῦ*), an expression which is hard to understand. But if we render it *in presence of*, etc., and recollect that the parties stood *before* the judge, the difficulty will be much diminished.

There are many other passages where this appears to be the right meaning of the phrase; in the New Testament we may notice the following,—Luke xxiv. 36; John viii. 3, 9, xx. 19, 26; Acts i. 15, iv. 7; Col. ii. 14; 2 Thess. ii. 7. The second of these appears to be parallel to the place just considered, so that after *ἐν μέσῳ* we should supply *ἀντοῦ* and not *λαόν*, as the woman was brought before Jesus as a judge.

THE END.







